

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

BARON BUSTED

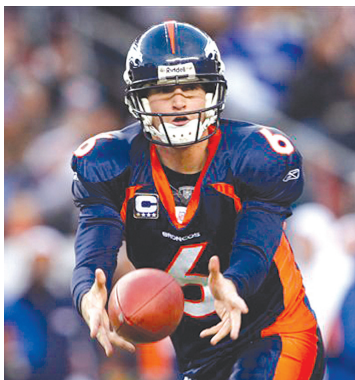


Alleged Mexican drug trafficker Vicente Carrillo Leyva looks on during his presentation to the media in Mexico City, Thursday, April 2, 2009. Carrillo Leyva, one of Mexico's most wanted drug suspects who allegedly was the second-in-command of the powerful Juarez cartel, was caught while exercising in a park in a posh Mexico City neighborhood early Wednesday, the Attorney General's office said Thursday.

See **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**


SPORTS NEWS

BOLTIN' BRONCO



In this Nov. 2, 2008, file photo, Denver Broncos quarterback Jay Cutler rolls out for a pass against the Miami Dolphins in an NFL football game in Denver. The Broncos have agreed to trade Cutler to the Chicago Bears. The Broncos announced the deal Thursday, April 2, 2009, and said terms would be disclosed later.

See **Sports Today**



Price of a barrel of petroleum today:
US\$ 53.64

Eric and Arel Wente arrive on Aruba for **5th Wente Vineyards/Papiamento Golf Tournament**



Eric Wente (at left) from Wente Vineyards visited Casa Tua at Arawak yesterday to introduce himself, he was accompanied by Govert (right), who is the supplier for Wente wine. Casa Tua Manager Yannick welcomed Eric and Govert together with Lianne (middle) and German (right).

ORANJESTAD - Fifth-generation Eric Wente of Wente Vineyards in California arrived in the company of his wife Arel on Aruba yesterday. The two are here for the fifth annual Wente Vineyards/Papiamento Restaurant Golf Tournament, which is held at the Tierra del Sol Golfcourse this coming Saturday. Govert van der Hout of the Arion Wine Company and representative of Wente Wines on Aruba, was at the airport

to welcome his two friends together with Jairus Barry of Aruba's Junior Parliament. The Wente Vineyards/Papiamento Restaurant Golf Tournament is a charity event. Last year's proceeds will be spent on the organization of the Dia Nacional di Aruba Limpi (a national clean-up day), which is held on April 25; this is an activity by the Junior Parliament of Aruba. The 2009 charity of choice will be the foundation that

feeds children who go to school hungry. Sponsors who will place their banners at one of the eighteen holes include AIB, Coldwell Banker, Deloitte, Dufry, Fantastic Garden, Freeway, Hugo Boss, Ling & Sons, Nagico Insurance, Ocean Air, Optica Oduber & Kan, Valero, Vertegenwoordiging van Nederland in Aruba, Willy's Pool, Digicel, Zen Design, Crystal Casino, Fuji Water and Taste of Belgium.



Every taxi receives an Air Freshener

HARD ROCK CAFE ARUBA holds Taxi Appreciation Day



PALM BEACH - Yesterday Aruban Taxi drivers merged at the Hard Rock Café Aruba in Palm Beach for a special event called "Taxi Appreciation Day". The Management and staff of the Hard Rock shared their generosity with the local community and held this appreciation day for all of the Taxi Cab Drivers on the island. As it turned out, the Taxi Cab drivers loved the event and appreciated their special day at the Hard Rock Café. For this special day, Hard Rock Café presented each Taxi Cab Driver with an air freshener for their car, a "dushi" coffee from Segafredo and cookie made in the Hard Rock Café kitchen.

Continued on page 6




NOBO
PREMIUM FISH SANDWICH
i'm lovin' it™

The Upcoming Easter Holiday Delivers Relaxation Opportunities



TIERRA DEL SOL – Body & Soul Spa released a number of specials designed to make the Easter holidays in Aruba even more enjoyable and relaxing. Spa Manager Orly Valor reports

that the stylish and elegantly appointed Body & Soul Spa is offering Swedish Massage at \$70; Manicure-Pedicure at \$ 65; European Facials at \$70; Short hair blow-dry at \$35 and long

hair blow-dry at \$45. The special offers include the use of all club facilities during the day, namely the use of the Fitness Center, Sauna, Steam room, Pool and Jacuzzi.



Body & Soul Spa is a sanctuary overlooking the California lighthouse the ocean and the golf course, allowing visitors to nourish their body, revitalize their mind and enhance their well-being as never before. A visit to Body & Soul Spa is a journey to vitality, as you get pamper from head to toe in an array of soothing and healing treatments.

The spa's professional staff delivers a variety of therapies, including massages, body wraps, skin and body treatments,

aromatherapies, hydrotherapy, manicure and pedicure and a full service hair salon. Patrons are invited to explore over 4,000 square feet of pure pleasure, with outdoor retreat areas as well as a private whirlpool, men and ladies' private locker rooms, dry sauna, wet steam and power shower. The spa provides plush robes, spa slippers and towels, and personal amenities are also provided along with complimentary beverages and teas.

Looking for the legendary seafood entrees?

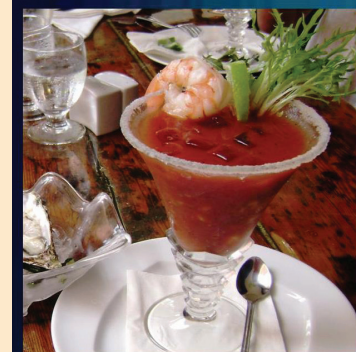
Moby Dick's prepares for Easter Week

Don't spend another day without a bloody oyster

PASEO HERENCIA—Moby Dick's has one mission; to take you to the depths of the blue ocean to taste some of the most exquisite dishes to come from the deep. What a truly beautiful restaurant this is, and what a unique interior to match. The inside is studded with artwork, amazing glass carvings, and both floors are dominated by gigantic fountains, with water running from ceiling to floor along multicoloured lit

fibre optic cables. The stairway is lined by an impressive painting which runs along the complete wall. The menu promises to be a true seafood lovers dream. Lobsters, fresh fish fillets, shrimps, Moby Dick's has everything on the menu. There is of course a land lubbers section for those who are so disposed. The wine list is impressive to say the least, and the cocktails are definitely worth a taste.

Moby Dick's is open for lunch as well. The chef has made a well rounded, extensive menu for you to choose from. You will find what you want, whatever your craving may be at that time. The staff is amongst the friendliest on the island, ever so attentive to your every whim. So long story short, for unbelievable seafood in unique surroundings, go to Moby Dick's. You'll have a whale of a time!



MOBY DICK'S
SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Legendary dishes
Recommended for
Easter week

Lunch & Dinner

Crab Bisque
A rich and creamy soup finished with Cognac

Grouper Siciliano
Grouper fillet oven baked with tomatoes, herbs, parmesan cheese, white wine sauce

Seafood Pasta "Moby Dick"
Jumbo shrimp, scallops and fish, fettuccine, sun dried tomato, rucola, white wine sauce

Shrimp a 'la Provencal
Caribbean jumbo shrimp, garlic, tomatoes and fresh herbs

Banana Banana
Caramelized bananas, banana ice cream, chocolate sauce

For reservations please call (297) **586-8333** / Open 11:30am—11:00pm / Paseo Herencia Shopping, Palm Beach, Aruba

Don't leave Aruba without trying the BLOODY OYSTER! It is the ultimate delicacy known by deep sea connoisseurs. This is heavenly combination of Tomato Juice, Cold Vodka, Oysters, Shrimp, Tabasco, Lime and Pepper.

Richard & Karen O'Kane honored at the Renaissance Ocean Suites Resort



title. The recent honoring was effected by the Aruba Tourism Authority Associate Ricardo Croes at Renaissance Ocean Suites they call their home away from home. Richard & Karen O'Kane were honored as Ambassadors of Goodwill after visiting Aruba for 20 years.

On picture: Mr. Ricardo Croes together with Richard & Karen and also staff from the Renaissance Ocean Suites.



ORANJESTAD - Recently at the Renaissance Ocean Suites vacationers were presented with honorary titles created by the Ministry of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guest visiting Aruba for ten and 20 consecutive years. Special friends of Aruba, enjoying ten or more annual vacations here, are given the Distinguished Guest certificate and those with twenty consecutive years are awarded the Ambassador of goodwill

Come and enjoy your Exclusive Gourmet store

WINE, LIQUOR & SPECIALTIES

Le Gourmet situated at the Village in-front of Radisson Hotel is Aruba's finest Wine, Liquor and Specialty store, offering a vast array of the finest wines that you can find from France, Italy, California, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand, Spain, Australia, South Africa, we also offer a great variety of liquors and hard liquors, beers, and special cheeses, chocolates, coffee and much more. Le Gourmet has a comfortable browsing atmosphere and an extremely knowledgeable and friendly staff, we guarantee the best prices on the high rise strip. Le Gourmet is an all-in-one fine beverage and gourmet shopping experience.

Open: Mon-Sat from 2 pm to 10 pm
Sunday from 5pm to 10pm.
Step in and enjoy!

Located right in front of the Radisson Resort at The Village Mall Tel: 5867478
E-mail: legourmet@setarnet.aw Hotel delivery available!

I.S.A Ushers in Spring

On Saturday, March 28, there was a great deal going on at Wayaca 238A. The event was the International School of Aruba Spring Fling. This community event provided an opportunity for all in attendance to enjoy great entertainment, food and drink, various musical presentations, and a fantastic showing of talented ISA students and adults. When the crowd was not sitting back eating and enjoying the entertainment, there were booths where one could have fun and test their skills. Finally, the greatest hit was the door prizes and grand raffle where a variety of items were given away.

This was the first year for such an event on the school's Wayaca campus. Students, teachers and parents also came together to provide this wonderful experience totaling five hours of activities and fun.

Special thanks and appreciation go out to the primary sponsors of the event, ATCO Eco-Tech, Tropical Bottling Company, Le Petit Café and Huchada Bakery. The organizing committee would also like to thank the many individuals and organizations who contributed to the grand raffle and door prizes.

Everything, including comments from many of those in attendance points towards a repeat of the event next year. ISA hopes everyone had a great time at Spring Fling 2009, and we hope to see you at our Spring Fling in 2010.

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(up to 10 years old)

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A long tradition of serving the finest
Seafood & Steaks
for over 20 years!



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For reservations call: 583-2515 - Klipstraat 12, Downtown.
www.driftwoodaruba.com

* Not valid with any other promotion.



NOTICE:

Casino chips with old Aruba Marriott Sail Boat Logo can be cashed out at the Casino Cage until July 1, 2009.

No chip exchange is possible after July 1, 2009

Untied goes classical!

Art, live music 2x1 come together once again at The Westin



Photo by Julia Renfro



Photo by Julia Renfro

PALM BEACH – Today is the month's first Friday and that means that The Westin's lobby come alive to welcome everybody looking for a cool and stylish place to welcome the weekend. The Triple Happy Hour Event is on this afternoon from 6 till 9 pm, with all you need to have a real

good time.

This is 'Untied's' fifth edition and it keeps growing every time. For the month of April, being the Lent period, The Westin opted for something different. This time 'Untied...goes classical.' This is the happy hour where island executives come together

to loosen their ties and open up upper button to make the first toast of the weekend.

As usual, there is plenty to enjoy. Like the many features that no other happy hour has. For example valet parking, ors d'oeuvres and fabulous prizes. For this occasion, the guest artist is the talented guitarist Hernando Mayo. Hernando Maya is a Colombian guitarist living on our island for more than 28 years already. He is a graduate of Berklee College Of Music in 1984, in modern harmony, arranging, improvisation and orchestra. In his two decades of experience playing in Aruban hotels, he has accompanied many international show like Jimy Randolph, Half Frazier, Alberto Rochi, David Dean, Las Vegas Fantasy, Joe Cavalier, Raphel, Celia Cruz, Alci Acosta.

Now he has his own orchestra and promotes his songs on internet (www.Youtube.com) under his own name. Maya will show case a musical repertoire that promises to delight everybody's musical taste and set just the right mood to enjoy a nice conversation and leave all week worries behind. 'Untied... The Triple Happy Hour Event' is going to be fabulous. Don't miss it!



Photo by Julia Renfro



Photo by Julia Renfro



Photo by Julia Renfro

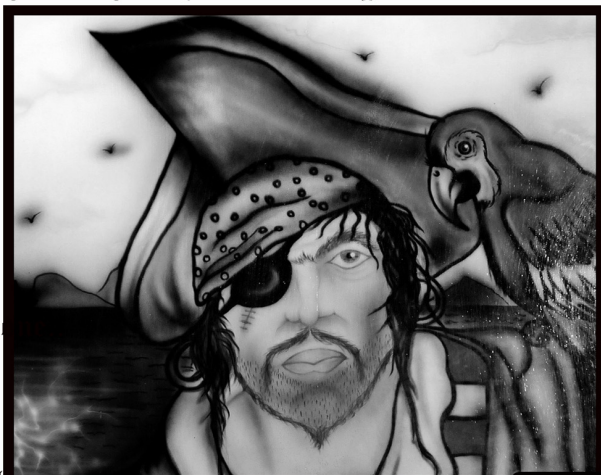


Buccaneer Restaurant

Aruba's Legendary Buccaneer Restaurant, serving the freshest fish and seafood from the sea to your to your plate including steaks, duck, poultry and pasta dishes.

Whether you come with the whole family, bring a group of friends, or enjoy for a romantic dinner for two, Buccaneer has the high quality service and fresh, flavorful international dishes that will make your dining experience a memorable reservations email us at info@buccaneeraruba.com or call 586-6172

Monday - Saturday 5:30-10 pm



Ahoy Matey bring this ad in for a free glass of house wine



The Italians Enjoy Mr Jazz Lifestyle



PASEO HERENCIA – A group of Italian electrical material wholesalers, IMEP, came to the island as guests of the Holiday Inn Sunspree. During their stay here they experienced a number of premier establishments including Mr Jazz by Chucho Valdes, the new supper-club at Paseo Herencia and fell in love with the combination of cool Jazz and gourmet dining, as presented at their Serata di Arrivederci. House band members, some

of the BEST musicians on the island were the handsome Martin Buitemberg, on guitar, the elegant Delbert Bernabela, on sax, the passionate Angelo Kock, on piano, the dynamic Eric Jan Eman on bass and drummer extraordinaire, Jeremy Bonarriva, also the musical director. Their first set over cocktails and delightful three course dinner presented by Italian master chef Vittorio Muscariello teased the VIPs appetites with classic



jazz, while the second set, set the visitors ablaze with singer Jairo Boekhoudt dishing out pop hits and jazzy contemporary compositions.

Pictured here the lucky Italians, well fed – Tortino di Melanzane, chased by American Steak and Torta Millefoglie, and well serenaded, basking in music, at Mr Jazz, living it up in Aruba. The same band plays Tuesdays & Wednesday says Boekhoudt, also the Sales & Marketing Director of Mr.Jazz By Chucho Valdes. Next week Thursday, Mr Jazz is introducing a bigger band and singer Tony Marshall, a Frank Sinatra & Dean Martin specialist. Fridays and Saturdays the Carlos Bislip quartet entertains during the first two sets and later the fabulous Bilongo spin salsa and Latin music to the wee hours.



Special friends of Aruba honored at Divi Village Resort

ORANJESTAD - Recently at Divi Village vacationers were presented with honorary titles created by the Ministry of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guest visiting Aruba for ten and 20 consecutive years. Special friends of Aruba, enjoying ten or more annual vacations here, are given the Distinguished Guest certificate and those with twenty consecutive years are awarded the Ambassador of goodwill title. The recent honorings were effected by the Aruba Tourism Authority associate Ricardo Croes at Divi Village they call their home away from home. The following guests were honored as Distinguished visitors after visiting Aruba for more then 10 years: Madeline Heslin, David & Shirley Richards, Gerald & Dolores Brown, Peter & Monica Burke,

On picture Mr. Ricardo Croes together with all honorees and also Gloria y Griffith from the Divi Village Resort



\$19.95, All You Can Eat Dinner Buffet

Served daily from 5:00 to 10 p.m (price per person and subject to service charge & tax)

- **Sundown Special**, receive 10% off your meal when seated by 6 p.m.

*Kids Eat Free *Kids under age 12, one per paying adult

Monday Seafood Sampler

Tuesday Bravo Italiano

Wednesday An island favorite - BBQ night

Thursday Chateaubriand, Oo-la-la

Friday International Seafood Festival

Saturday Simply Perfect - Prime Rib

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Every taxi receives an Air Freshener

HARD ROCK CAFE ARUBA holds Taxi Appreciation Day



PALM BEACH - Yesterday Aruban Taxi drivers merged at the Hard Rock Café Aruba in Palm Beach for a special event called "Taxi Appreciation Day". The Management and staff of the

Hard Rock shared their generosity with the local community and held this appreciation day for all of the Taxi Cab Drivers on the island. As it turned out, the Taxi Cab drivers loved the event and



appreciated their special day at the Hard Rock Café.

For this special day, Hard Rock Café presented each Taxi Cab Driver with an air freshener for their car, a "dushi" coffee from Segafredo and cookie made in the Hard Rock Café kitchen.

The Management and staff of the Hard Rock Café were present for this festive morning and personally introduced themselves to the island's most fabulous concierges aka



SITE Sets a Course to Paradise!

Aruba to Host Society of Incentive and Travel Executives' 2009 International Conference

ORANJESTAD - Aruba is thrilled to announce that the Society of Incentive Travel Executives (SITE) has selected the island paradise as the host country for the 2009 International Conference, set for December 3-6. The event will bring together the top minds in incentive travel, a multi-billion dollar global industry, to one of the Caribbean's most celebrated destinations. Aruba promises to be the "host with the most" as it welcomes hundreds of delegates from around the world for three days of educational sessions, vendor showcases, roundtables, networking events, gala dinners and much more. The 2009 International Conference will be held at the two official host hotels, The Westin Aruba Resort and the Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa.

Securing this significant conference comes at a perfect time for the destination as Aruba is enjoying increased interest from around the globe. Not only has the island recently undergone over \$350 million in upgrades, expansions and renovations across all aspects of the tourism sector, but arrivals from the U.S. in 2007 were also up 3.27% over the previous year. While worldwide arrivals also saw a remarkable increase with an extraordinary 8.56% spike over 2006, with 753,816 visitors from around the world making Aruba their destination of choice in 2007.

"SITE's membership is rich with innovators who greatly influence not only the evolution of the incentive industry, but also the business outcomes of client organizations," said SITE President Padraic Gilligan. "The SITE International Conference is a superlative forum where professionals from around the world gather to share insights that help them achieve professional goals, surpass client expectations, and have a meaningful and positive impact on economies of destination cities around the world."

"We were thrilled to hear of SITE's decision to make Aruba its host location for the 2009 International Conference," said Minister of Tourism and Transportation, Edison Briesen. "The incentive travel industry is an important one for our island and we are looking forward to showcasing the many things that sets Aruba apart from the rest of the Caribbean region throughout the conference. We are confident that SITE's commitment to bringing together the most influential minds in this field,

coupled with Aruba's dedication to delivering an unmatched travel experience to all our guests, is a recipe for success."

These principals of community, leadership and growth guide SITE's vision — as well as its commitment to selecting distinct locales for its own events. Aruba, situated in the

southern Caribbean, is a tropical paradise that enjoys year-round near perfect weather, less than 20 inches of rainfall annually, extraordinary hotels and resorts, over 200 incredible international restaurants, and an extremely rich heritage. Arubans, renowned for their warmth and hospitality and known as the friendliest in

the Caribbean region, proudly showcase the island's cultural and environmental diversity, and are equally devoted to respecting and preserving the island's pristine marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

"Because Aruba is, without question, one of the top

incentive travel destinations in the Caribbean, it is fitting that SITE, the foremost professional association devoted to the incentive travel market, would choose our island as the host for its 2009 International Conference," said Myrna Jansen-Feliciano, managing director for the Aruba Tourism Authority.



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The biggest stage production in the Caribbean, featuring Cuban dancers and entertainers directly from Havana



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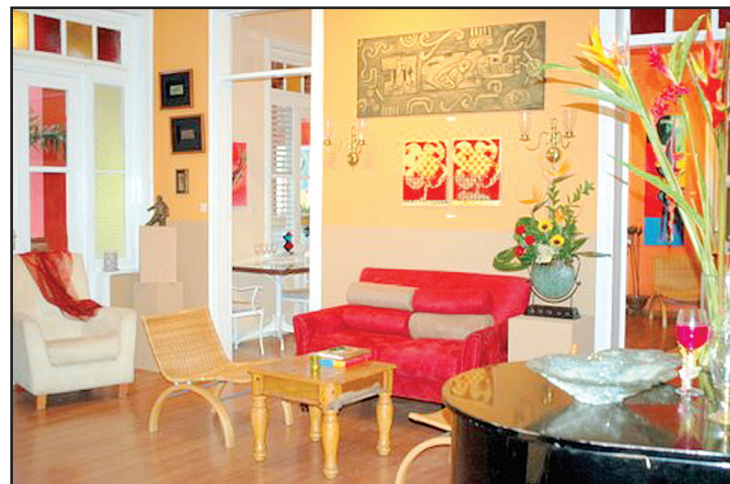
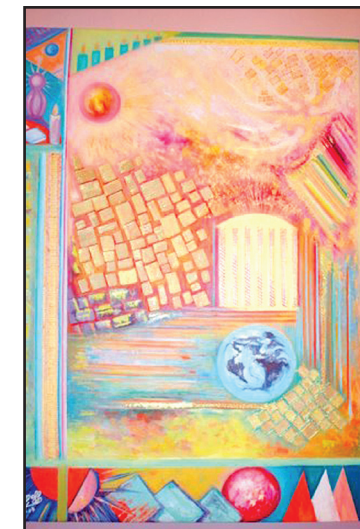
Bring this ad for a 15% discount, only valid at the Crystal Theater box office, Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino, open from 2 to 9, Monday through Saturday.

This special is NOT valid in combination with any other specials and cannot be purchased at any other vendor than the Box Office of the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino.



“MUSA” Art Café opens on Main St.

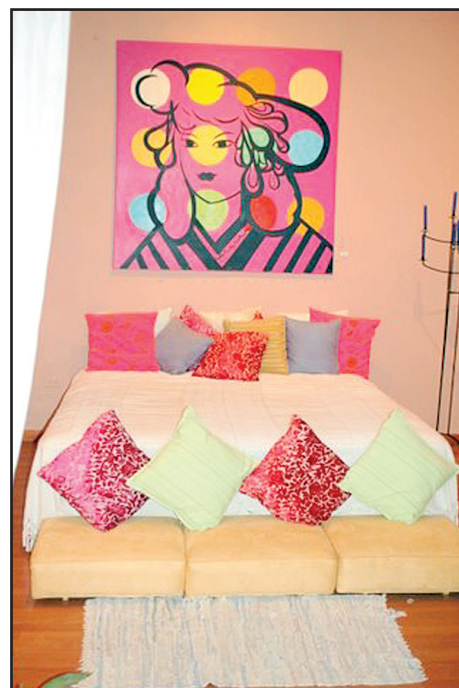
Former ACCESS ART Gallery offers comfort and artsy charm



but a real café with a varied menu of delicious meals, snacks and beverages. The décor is varied and beautiful – surrounded by the art pieces for sale, it is an inspiring place. There are several sitting areas, each with its own flavor, a dining table, a nice big bed to relax, and an open air terrace. The grand piano, there since the space was ACCESS ART Gallery, has stayed, with future concerts and musical activities planned as well. The space has been

By Jan Falcone
Special to Aruba Today

upstairs on Main St. in Oranjestad, upstairs from La MODERNA. “MUSA” Art Café is not only an art gallery,



transformed into a very special and unique place amongst Aruba’s day and nightspots.. There is the original bar on the terrace as it was in ACCESS ART Gallery, but

another one also inside. The space has been used wisely. Angela Croes, owner, is the one with all the artsy charm and taste. It was she who designed the entire café. Her well selected antique décor

makes it the perfect spot for meetings and conversations. Therefore MUSA is not just gallery space, but a meeting place where art meets the enthusiast, a relaxed gathering spot for sharing visions and

exchanging ideas. Thursdays are movie nights at 8 p.m. There are also live concerts planned, and live music during lunch and dinner. They are offering space for rent for private parties, meetings, workshops, lectures, etc., as well. The staff believes that the public will like their art café project because they will feel the easiness of the space

and taste the love that goes into everything they do. Guests will also be able to enjoy small dinners with excellent imported wines. “MUSA” Art Café is located at Caya Betico Croes 10-18, which is the ex-ACCESS ART Gallery. Opening hours are Monday through Saturday from 11 A.M. to 1 A.M. Call them for a reservation or info at: 588-7837

Het Binnenhuys presents "Believe"

Décor boutique invites 4 local artists's to present their latest



By Jan Falcone

Special to Aruba Today

This weekend, the premier design store in Aruba, Het Binnenhuys, presented 4 local artists' works in mixed media.

Anthony Beaujon, an autodidact paints bright vivid scenes on canvas, and is mainly inspired by color pencils and cartoon characters.

Carole Habibe, another autodidact, works with mixed media and creates fabulous locally inspired objects. Her work ranges from paintings, handmade quilts and other objects such as decorated calabas and lamps made out of palm tree leaves. Carole likes to work with natural materials and bright colors that draw the viewer to her art, rather than to the artist. Presented now at Het Binnenhuys are her large, one of a kind crosses that are a

must-see!

Elisa Lejuez is very well known both in Aruba and Curacao, as well as the rest of the Dutch Antilles. Her art is innovative and provoking and she manages to redefine contemporary art. Kitchen Blessings, her previous collection displayed at Het Binnenhuys, was a huge success when it was presented for the first time ever in Aruba. Elisa has provided extensive collections in her many solo and group exhibitions, and her works can be seen in many offices and private homes in the Caribbean. The present exhibition is a new dimension in her work. Elisa uses patterns and various art text and pictures in her paintings, always a mix of many different types of art and textile prints.

Mo Mohammed is an all-around artist, musician, and traveler. This


high-energy person is almost 65 years old, and he and his sons work together on all kinds of projects nonstop to exercise his creativity as much as possible. He is very hopeful for the future of 2009!

Het Binnenhuys is a design store, but also an art gallery, with new art and artists being presented on a monthly basis. The building it was housed in is a former mansion restored to its luster, with the original stained glass windows and antique tiling in "True Island Class".

Owner Karin Martens loves to participate in the local art scene – always supporting and stimulating the many artists. Het Binnenhuys carries paintings, all kinds of tantalizing designs, unique glassware and dinnerware, all kinds of decorative objects, statues, gifts, furniture and jewelry.

This unique boutique is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 to 5, and is located at Avenida Milio Croes 26 in Dakota, Oranjestad, up the street from Flora Market and Price Smart, and right across from Van Dorp bookstore. They can be reached by calling + (297) 582-3374 or by writing: info@hetbinnenhuysaruba.com Appointments can be made by calling + (297) 734-9166. Be sure to check them out, or go to: www.hetbinnenhuysaruba.com.





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Stocks extend 4-week rally; Dow breaches 8,000

By SARA LEPRO
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — Investors dove into stocks Thursday, extending a rally that gave the Dow Jones industrial average its best four weeks since 1933.

Stocks rose across the board in heavy trading following an accounting rule change that will help banks pare their losses and after commitments from world leaders to toughen regulatory oversight of financial institutions.

The Dow broke through 8,000 for the first time since Feb. 9 but ended slightly below that level ahead of the government's employment report Friday that could easily upset the market if it comes in below forecasts — or send prices rocketing higher if it's better than expected.

The Dow is now up 20.4 percent over the last month, its biggest percentage gain in a four-week period since the spring of 1933. Bits of good news about the economy in recent weeks, including better-than expected-numbers on housing and manufacturing, have given investors more reasons to buy.

The Dow gained 216.48, or 2.8 percent, to close at 7,978.08, after earlier rising as much as 314 points.

"People are worried about this (employment) report, so the last hour we sold off," said Richard Campagna, managing director and chief investment officer of Pasadena, Calif.-based investment manager 300 North Capital.

Broader market indicators also rose sharply. The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 23.30, or 2.9 percent, to 834.38. The Nasdaq composite index rose 51.03, or 3.3 percent, to 1,602.63.

Industrial and consumer discretionary stocks picked up speed Thursday while demand for safe-haven assets like gold and Treasuries plummeted.

"Everyone is in a buying mood," said Eric Ross, director of research at brokerage Canaccord Adams. "Everyone is feeling good. ... A lot of this is simply confidence."

The market has managed to shrug off some negative data on employment recently such as initial claims for jobless benefits. But a surprisingly bad report on the March job market could easily stifle the market's growing optimism. Economists predict the report will show a loss of 654,000 jobs following a drop of 651,000 jobs in February, which was a record third straight month of job losses above 600,000. The unemployment rate is expected to rise to 8.5 percent from 8.1 percent in February.

Banking shares got a significant boost after a rulemaking body for the accounting industry relaxed financial reporting rules that force banks to value their assets at current market prices. The change in "mark-to-market" accounting rules, which should help banks reduce losses, sends another lifeline to the troubled financial industry. Many investors believe financial stocks, which have largely carried the market's four-week rally, are a gauge of when the economy is turning.

Among the biggest advancers in the financial industry Thursday were Wells Fargo & Co., which jumped 85 cents, or 5.9 percent, to \$15.33, and Goldman Sachs Group Inc., which rose \$3.93, or 3.6 percent, to \$114.22. Regional banks also rose sharply.

The conclusion of a one-day summit in London of the world's finance ministers sent stocks to their highest levels in early afternoon trading. While the G-20 leaders did not satisfy calls for new stimulus measures, they pledged an additional \$1.1 trillion in financing to the International Monetary Fund and declared a crackdown on tax havens and

hedge funds.

Another positive indicator on the economy also lifted sentiment on Wall Street. Factory orders posted a large increase in February, coming on the heels of better-than-expected readings on pending home sales, manufacturing activity and auto sales the day before. In other trading, the Russell 2000 index of smaller companies jumped 21.03, or 4.9 percent, to 450.19.

For every three stocks that fell, nearly nine stocks rose on the New York Stock Exchange where consolidated volume came to 7.36 billion shares.

The Dow is still down about 9 percent for the year, while the S&P 500 is down nearly 8 percent. The Nasdaq is up 1.6 percent.

While analysts have warned that the market could retest the lows hit early last month, there's no doubt a growing sense on Wall Street the economy, at least stateside, might be bottoming out.

"The market mindset is: OK, we're not in a tailspin," said Jack A. Ablin, chief investment officer at Harris Private Bank. The benchmark 10-year Treasury note fell nearly 1 point, sending its yield up to 2.76 percent from 2.66 percent late Wednesday. The dollar fell against other major currencies after the European Central Bank cut its key interest rate by less than expected. Gold prices also fell.

Oil prices benefited from the better-than-expected economic news. Light, sweet crude jumped \$4.25 to settle at \$52.64 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Overseas markets also logged big gains. Japan's Nikkei stock average rose 4.4 percent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index jumped 7.4 percent. In Europe, Britain's FTSE 100 rose 4.3 percent, Germany's DAX index rose 6.1 percent, and France's CAC-40 rose 5.4 percent.

5 banks repay \$353M in bailout funds



U.S. President Barack Obama smiles during a news conference at the G20 Summit in London, April 2, 2009. Obama, after helping broker a deal to tackle the global economic crisis, heads to France on Friday to try to secure NATO backing for a new strategy to turn the tide in Afghanistan.
REUTERS/Jason Reed

By JEANNINE AVERSA
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Five banks have repaid millions of dollars they received from the government's \$700 billion financial bailout pot, the Obama administration said Thursday.

The Treasury Department, which oversees the bailout program, said the banks returned a total of \$353 million.

The banks are: Iberiabank Corp. of Lafayette, La.; Bank of Marin Bancorp of Novato, Calif.; Old National Bancorp. of Evansville, Ind.; Signature Bank of New York; and Centra Financial Holdings Inc. of Morgantown, W.Va. They were the first banks to repay the government, wanting to escape the increasingly tough restrictions placed on participants in the rescue program. In addition to the \$353 million, the banks paid the government a total of \$5.4 million in dividends, Treasury Department spokesman Andrew Williams said. The program was enacted in early October after the financial crisis — the worst since the 1930s — intensified. The goal of the program was to inject capital in banks so that they would be in a better position to boost lending, a crucial ingredient to any economic recovery. Nearly \$200 billion has been injected into banks thus far. The five banks have 15 days to buy back warrants from the government. If they don't, the government will sell them to private investors, Williams said.



New designer home in Savaneta has spacious back porch and beautiful shaded garden with waterfall, Jacuzzi and storage room, with lots of space for a greenhouse out back. It sits on 11,300 sq. feet of property land. Reduced for a quick sale to \$211,000, this home has 2 bdrms, walk-in master closet, state of the art kitchen and 2 baths, high ceilings, and is easily expandable to 3 or even more bdrms. It sits on the end of a quiet Cul de Sac on a paved road in an upscale neighborhood. Take the convenient path close by and walk to supermarket, hardware store & other shops, as well as restaurants. The beach is a convenient 10 min. walk away. There is nothing not to like in this beautiful home! Call 564-0644

Beware Media Bearing Gift-gates

The real question about how Barack and Michelle Obama are being received on their Rolling-G-20-Summit/Euro-Tour '09 has nothing to do with how the Europeans treat them, but all about the American mainstream media itself: What infinitesimal nit will they find to pick about the new president's conduct abroad that can be blown up into a two- to three-day pseudo-international incident?

You know the sort of story I mean. We're not talking about serious systemic issues, such as the different perspective a country like Germany (with universal health care, generous unemployment benefits, and a highly unionized work force) might have on the need for a global stimulus when compared to the U.S., where the party Obama just turned out of office has proposed effectively privatizing Medicare. That would be too much like journalism, and way too MEGO.

We're looking here for a truly small-bore, utterly irrelevant, content-free distraction, like the ones the MSM entertained us with during March Meme Madness. Stories like Obama laughs too much

, teleprompters too much, or simply does too much.

You know the media nitwit-pickers have struck when, at some point, they've made the exact opposite charge--that Obama's too serious, too off the cuff, or does too little, all well-worn themes from the campaign. On Tuesday, for example, a Fox News promo tried to scorch the president with the tagline "Rock star no more," suggesting he's lost his touch. Of course, that's the B-side of McCain's complaint last summer (megaphoned all over Fox) that Obama drew too big a crowd in Berlin, proving he was the "world's biggest celebrity"--and if the Eurotrash love him, how could straight-talkin' 'muricans ever accept him as president?

But let's face it: However unpopular American and British financiers may be in Europe, even Fox is having a hard time insisting that the populist firehose over there is aimed at Obama himself. The press spent two weeks in this country trying to hang Obama with the AIG bonuses, and his popularity went up.

A more likely candidate for MSM trumpetation is the line going around rightwing blogs, that the Obamas are narcissitic and stingy gifters. The English press made a big deal last month about how Prime Minister Gordon Brown gave Obama a pen mount made from the wood of a 19th century British anti-slaving warship when he visited Washington, and all he got in return was a lousy stack of American DVDs. So when it was learned that the president gave Queen Elizabeth II an iPod, the blogs went into overdrive--AmericanDigest.com dubbed the Obamas "the Clampetts," asking, "Were they born in a barn?"

Turns out the Queen requested the video iPod the president gave her, and he filled it with footage of her American visits and 40 showtunes; he also presented her with a rare songbook signed by Richard Rodgers, the Broadway composer who wrote one of the Queen's fave musicals, "Oklahoma!" But that won't stop the piss-ant dramas. When Gift-gate turned out to be just another murder of Vince Foster, some of the same folks started getting the vapors over Michelle patting the Queen's shoulders during their meet'n'greet. Nobody "touches" the Queen, for chrissakes, they mooned--at least, until Buckingham Palace put out word that there was no violation of protocol, and the Queen thought Michelle was expressing a very natural "affection," which she shares.

Just because both these shots at the Obamas' legitimacy went foul so quickly doesn't mean the desperate will give up, unfortunately. After all, after weeks on the case, conventional-wisdom dispensing machine Mark Halperin was on Monday's Morning Joe still kvetching about how something or other was an example of Obama "doing too much." These people are as incapable of embarrassment as Inspector Clouseau.



What the poor can teach the rich at G-20

Washington – This week's G-20 summit is essentially an echo chamber for the world's wealthy to talk macrofinance. The world economy might rebound more quickly if they listen to what the poor have to say about microfinance.

Indeed, just as the global financial system is imploding, the micro-financial sector is expanding. It is ironic that the poor – who have been chronically ignored, or at least underserved – seem more adept at keeping financial institutions healthy at a time when global giants are struggling to hold their ground even with billions in bailouts. Maybe the behemoths in the market (and those now wishing to save them) could learn a thing or two from the "little people."

How is it possible that microfinance institutions (MFIs), from famous operations, such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, to smaller ones in Nicaragua and Nigeria are actually faring well amid such strain? It is an issue of assets. While major players prioritized the creation of complex investment schemes that led to toxic assets, MFIs stayed focused on a more reliable asset class: their clients.

Largely, MFIs depend on the health of the local economy and thus the health of individual workers. These institutions aren't leveraging complex derivative markets and hedge funds at 30 to 1 to keep their profits rising. They depend on the ability of the poor to faithfully repay their loans – and about 98 percent of them do.

MFIs most insulated from the crisis are those that depend on their client's savings for their liquidity, instead of weakening capital markets. These savings not only help the institutions hedge against liquidity risks, but provide a safe, accessible place for the poor to build their own safety nets. This is especially crucial at a time when bailouts are seemingly doled out to everyone but the poor. In fact, numerous unregulated or under-regulated MFIs are now scrambling to become deposit-taking institutions.

The trend to prioritize deposit mobilization might seem counter-intuitive at a time of global economic recession. But now more than ever, institutions

cannot afford to ignore the vast demand for adequate savings services among their clients, on the one hand, and the critical fiscal need to build those resources internally, on the other.

But what lessons can G-20 leaders draw from the continued resilience of the microfinance system? First, get back to the basics. Support institutions that can stand and grow on the health of its clients, not on the health of opaque and necessarily volatile markets. Two of my colleagues at the New America Foundation, Ellen Seidman and Phillip Longman, have made the bold case for Americans to return to small banks and "relationship banking" from the "transactional banking" that came to permeate modern financial life.

Just like the microfinance industry in developing countries, small-scale financial institutions in the United States avoided getting their hands dirty in the derivative market and subprime lending mess. These institutions are in comparatively good shape today. It's not as lucrative a proposition as bundling securities and selling them off into the financial market without regard to the consequences, but such "relationship banking" is what is keeping the majority of the microfinance sector on track.

A healthy global financial system will depend on our global leaders' ability to accept and indeed embrace this reality. The irony of course is that Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner's plan, if successful, will probably erode local and regional banks (whether in the US or the developing world) because it disproportionately subsidizes the irresponsible players. With the huge government subsidies they have, big Wall Street banks are now able to offer higher deposit rates and lower interest rates than are local banks. The great danger is that these banks will eventually eat up global market share and threaten the growth of players who have kept their hands clean.

A second lesson is to ensure repayment through responsibility sharing that restores accountability. Microfinance lenders achieve such extraordinary repayment rates in part through careful monitoring and group-oriented incentives.

NJ warns nearly 3,000 to get tested for hep B

TRENTON, N.J. — New Jersey officials have advised nearly 3,000 people who share a doctor to get tested after five cancer patients who visited the physician were found to have hepatitis B.

Two cases of hepatitis B were confirmed in late February as connected with the office of Dr. Parvez Dara, an oncologist with offices in Toms River and Manchester, near the Jersey Shore, Marilyn Riley, spokeswoman for the state Health Department, said Thursday.

Health officials recently learned of three more cases, all in Toms River, in which the patients were also under Dara's care.

"These were older adults who didn't have other risk factors, so that is what raised a red flag," Riley said.

Ocean County decided to send a letter to all Dara's patients dating to 2002. The March 28 letter warns them of the risk and suggests they be tested for the liver diseases hepatitis B and hepatitis C and for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Linda Bradford of Bayville said she's worried about her husband's health after hearing news of the outbreak.

"The first thing I did was call my husband," Bradford told WCBS-TV. "I was terrified. Oh my God, what's going on here?"

Hepatitis B is transmitted through exposure to infected blood, often by sexual contact or infected needles. Dara's office treats patients with blood disorders and cancer, some of whom receive chemotherapy there.

"The evidence that's available suggests the infections could be linked to the method the clinical staff used to administer injectable medications," such as chemotherapy, Riley said. "There's no evidence to suggest the medications were a problem."

Dara faces suspension of his medical license in connection with the outbreak and for other alleged health code violations. A hearing is scheduled for Friday before the state Board of Medical Examiners.

Until then, he is performing only patient consultations, not procedures, said his lawyer, Robert Conroy. Neither of Dara's offices were open Thursday.

According to a report by the state epidemiology division, Dara has infection control violations dating to 2002, including violations of standards of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Conroy said that there is no proof the patients got the disease from Dara's office and that other factors aren't being considered. All five patients were also seen at Community Medical Center in Toms River, he said.

Health officials said they ruled the hospital out as a possible source of the infection.

Hepatitis B is transmitted through exposure to infected blood, often by sexual contact or infected needles.

Conroy said three patients were found to have dormant hepatitis infections that might have been noticed only after they started cancer treatments, which can suppress the body's immune system.

Because the patients live in the same area, he said, there could be another possible source.

"Absent any evidence, it is just as likely that those patients were infected (at) ... a common eatery," he wrote in a letter to the Medical Examiners Board.

Meanwhile, Conroy said Dara has received only support from his patients.

"The doctor has never felt more appreciated by his patients than he does right now," he said.

Ocean County Health Department spokesman Edward Rumen said no new cases have been reported since the alert was issued.

Atkins Diet Tougher on Heart After Weight Loss

-- In the "maintenance" phase that occurs after initial weight loss, the popular Ornish and South Beach diets seem to be easier on the heart than the high-fat, low-carbohydrate Atkins regimen, a new study finds.

Unlike numerous studies that have evaluated diets to see which might be better at achieving weight loss, this study, funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, looked at what happens to cholesterol levels and other cardiac risk factors when dieters reach their goal weight and remain on the diet.

The study involved 18 healthy people, with an average body-mass index (BMI) of 22.6 (18.5 to 24.9 is considered normal weight). Participants completed four weeks each on the Atkins (50 percent fat), South Beach (30 percent fat) and Ornish (10 percent fat) diets, in random order and with a four-week "washout" period between each diet. The study was done from January to December 2006.

The switch between diets meant that "each person served as his own control," explained principal investigator Dr. Michael Miller, director of the Center for Preventive Cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore.

At the start and after each four-week diet, the researchers evaluated cholesterol levels and other cardiac risk factors. They also looked at three-day

food records at the end of each diet phase. And they checked blood vessel functioning by measuring blood vessel dilation in the arm.

They found that "as you increase the amount of saturated fat [in the diet], blood vessel dilation is reduced," Miller said. Healthy vessel dilation is important to proper blood flow.

"The diet that performed the worst [on the blood vessel test] was the Atkins diet," Miller said. "It contains more saturated fat."

Participants ate about 30 grams of saturated fat a day while on the Atkins diet, compared to about 14 grams on South Beach and about 3 grams while on Ornish.

"We like to say saturated fat should be below 7 percent of total calories," Miller said. "So, if your caloric intake is 2,000, saturated fat should be about 14 grams [or less] daily."

The researchers also measured cholesterol levels, including total cholesterol, "good" cholesterol (HDL) and "bad" cholesterol (LDL). "On Atkins, cholesterol levels tended to go up," Miller said. "LDL increased by 8 percent [which was not enough to be statistically significant]."

On the South Beach diet, LDL decreased by about 12 percent, and on Ornish it declined by about 17 percent, the study showed.



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Jamie Foxx Slams the Door on Alleged Stalker



Los Angeles – For Jamie Foxx, it was Law Abiding Citizen by day and security guard by night. The Oscar winner got the better of an intruder in his Philadelphia hotel suite last month after the man tricked him into opening the door by posing as one of Beyoncé's producers. After realizing he didn't know the man, Foxx managed to keep him from fully entering the room and slammed the door. The suspect fled the scene, but the law ultimately caught up with him. Steven Taliver, 49, was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of stalking and other charges after Foxx's security team noticed the very same man who allegedly tried to bust into

the actor's room hanging around near the set of Foxx's next movie, Law Abiding Citizen, and called the cops. Philadelphia police confirmed to E! News Thursday that a trespassing incident did occur March 22 at the AKA Hotel in Rittenhouse Square, but would not divulge whether Foxx was the victim of an attempted burglary. "There was an arrest," a police spokesman said. "There was an incident. Someone was in an area they weren't supposed to be...inside the hotel." He denied that a physical confrontation occurred, but sources have

told Philadelphia's CBS 3 that Taliver had tried to break into Foxx's room three times—March 22, 27 and 31—and on one of those occasions, Foxx forcibly removed the intruder from the room himself and slammed the door in his face. A rep for Foxx, who was busy Thursday promoting his latest film, The Soloist, refused to comment, citing the ongoing legal matter. In addition to stalking, Taliver was also charged with burglary, making criminal threats, false imprisonment and harassment.

Yoko Ono to auction art for autism awareness

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) – Yoko Ono, the widow of John Lennon, unveiled a mural of clouds in the sky that will be auctioned in 67 puzzle pieces to raise funds and to mark the second annual World Autism Awareness Day. The 76-year-old Japanese artist and musician created the seven-foot tall "Promise" mural from acrylic materials. Each of the 67 pieces of art will be auctioned with starting bids of \$1,000 at www.charitybuzz.com/yoko. "When I was first approached to create an artwork for autism awareness I was shocked by the worldwide prevalence of this serious situation, especially among our children," Ono said at the auction launch at the United Nations. "My work, 'Promises,' symbolizes that we all hold a piece of this puzzle and we must work to raise awareness, funds for research and advocate for families who experience autism," she said, adding that the 67 pieces represent the 67 million people who have autism around the world. More than 100 events are being held around the world on Thursday in 35 countries to mark World Autism Awareness Day, one of only three issues to be recognized by the United Nations with a dedicated day. The others are AIDS and diabetes. Autism is a developmental disability that hinders a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships. Its cause is not known and there is no cure.

"I have often said a dream you dream alone is only a dream, a dream you dream together is reality," Ono said of the quest to find a cure for autism.

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'Crazy' plan to meet gymnast mentioned to Ala. cop

By GARRY MITCHEL
Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. — A man who authorities say tried to break onto the set of ABC's "Dancing With the Stars" was ticketed on his way to California and let go, despite telling a police officer in Alabama that his plan to meet contestant Shawn Johnson was "a little bit crazy."

Robert O'Ryan, 34, was arrested in Los Angeles on Tuesday, and police said a search of his car turned up a shotgun and handgun, both loaded, along with duct tape and love letters. The celebrity gymnast's family obtained a restraining order against O'Ryan the next day, saying she feared for her life.

O'Ryan was on his way to California when a police officer spotted him driving erratically around 1:30 a.m. March 19 on Interstate 10 in Loxley, a small town east of Mobile. During a half-hour traffic stop, O'Ryan told the officer that he was traveling to meet the Olympic gold medalist, according to a video recorded by the officer's dashboard camera.



This Oct. 14, 2008 file photo shows Shawn Johnson, 2008 United States Olympic balance beam gold medalist, at the 29th Annual Salute to Women In Sports Awards Dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. Court records show a restraining order has been issued, Wednesday, March 25, 2009, against a man authorities claim tried to break onto the set of 'Dancing with the Stars' to meet Johnson. (AP Photo/Evan Agostini, file)

"I'm meeting her there. I've been communicating with her. And, uh, basically I'm going to try to get her to marry me," O'Ryan said, adding that Johnson was on

TV.

But when pressed by the officer, who apparently didn't know who Johnson was, O'Ryan said he'd only spoken to the 17-year-old Johnson in his dreams.

"I know it sounds a little bit crazy, but my intuition tells me we're going to have a beautiful relationship together," O'Ryan said in the video first obtained by Mobile TV station WKRG.

When asked if he had any weapons in the vehicle, O'Ryan said told the officer, "No."

The officer then allowed O'Ryan to continue his trip to California after ticketing him for having no insurance and driving with an expired license plate. Loxley Police Chief Chip Cason said Thursday the officer, a 27-year police veteran, acted properly and didn't see a need to search the vehicle. Cason said the officer didn't recognize the celebrity dancer's name and there was no way for the officer to know the man's intentions. He said the Los Angeles prosecutor's office has asked Cason not to comment further.



Aye mami! Jennifer Lopez looked tasty in Tokyo last weekend as she promoted Thavasa's new handbag collection while wearing a striped blouse, black leggings, Ferragamo platform heels, and a fresh 'do featuring bangin' bangs.



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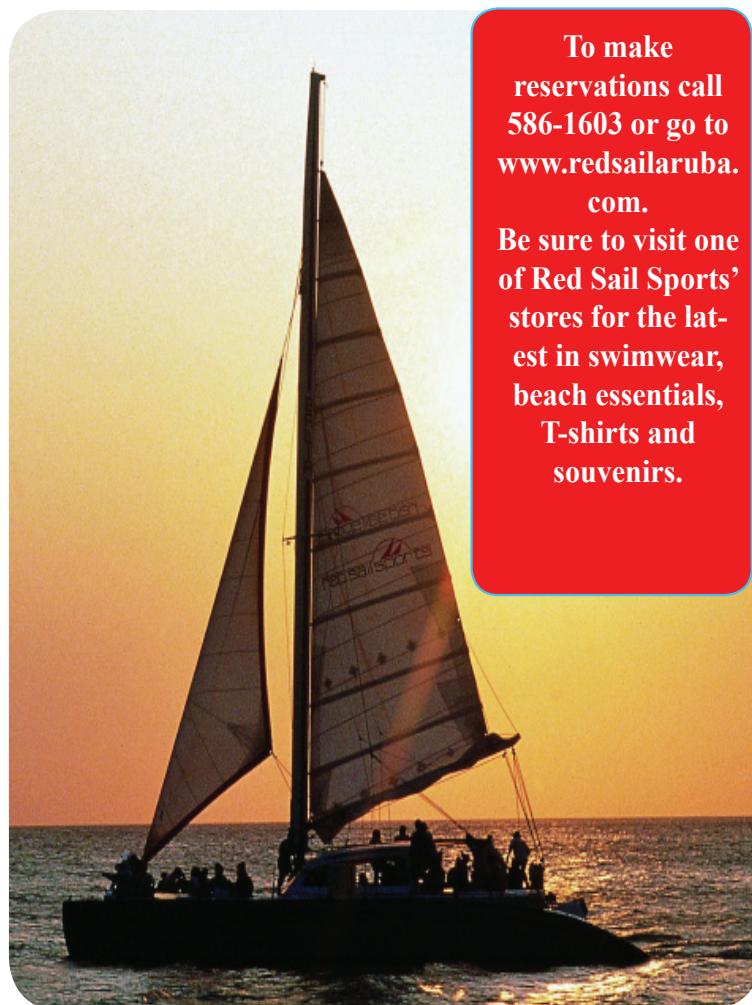
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Hard Rock Cafe is "over the top" for fun, food and reviving great memories

The official opening of **Hard Rock Cafe Aruba** in January had all the glitz and glamour of any Hollywood carpet event, and the newest addition to this world famous brand of casual eateries is an entertaining journey through musical history, as well as offering a guaranteed great meal at a very reasonable price. Music is so much a part of our lives, often interwoven with the landmark moments; the first kiss, a marriage proposal, the first dance as man and wife.

How many times have you heard or said, "**Honey, they are playing our song!**" Hard Rock has all those great

songs and videos in their play list, enveloping patrons in a world of music that brings back those special memories of moments that changed one's life. Founded by Isaac Tigrett and Peter Morton in 1971 and located right next door to Eric Clapton's recording studio in London, the first **Hard Rock Cafe** became an instant hit with those that loved a good "old-fashioned American hamburger" and started a legend, resulting in one of the largest and most successful leisure franchises existing today.

Hard Rock's remarkable music memorabilia collection began with a red fender given

Aruba's Flavour



the founders by Eric Clapton, to mark his special table where he came to dine on a daily basis.

Not to be outdone, other great names such as The Who followed his example; eventually leading to the assortment of music memorabilia that includes anything from a lock of hair to a five-ton psychedelic bus.

In **Aruba** you find no buses, but a fascinating collection of instruments, posters, wild and wicked costumes and

other miscellaneous items, many of them autographed by the legendary performers they commemorate.

Dozens of bits of memorabilia and high definition plasma screens create the music world ambiance that defines **Hard Rock Cafe**, as well as their diverse menu of fresh fajitas, authentic western barbecue, and of course, their famous certified Angus beef burgers, huge and juicy, the way a burger was meant to be.

Owners of the **Hard Rock Cafe Aruba** are particularly proud of the double bar that serves both inside and out; a stunning canopied terrace allows them to take full advantage of Aruba's famous tropical breezes and agreeable climate.

Opening night featured The Wailers, the famous band that made their name with Bob Marley, direct from Jamaica.

The appearance of such noted groups and live rock tributes are a trademark of **Hard Rock Cafés** around the world.

Hard Rock Cafe Aruba is located in the South Beach Mall across from the

Radisson Resort and open seven days a week, from 10:00 AM in the morning until 1:00 AM Sunday through

Thursday and until 2:00 AM on the weekends. It is comforting to know there is a great place to go for late night munching and fun times within an easy stroll from all the Palm Beach Resorts offering not only quality food and beverage at reasonable prices, but a musical trip down **Memory Lane!**



Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown, left, greets US President Barack Obama as he arrives for the G20 summit at the ExCel centre in London, Thursday, April 2, 2009. Leaders of the world's rich and developing countries sought to dispel the clouds over the world's troubled economy - and clear up divisions over how far to go with tougher financial regulation - at a crisis summit Thursday in London.

Associated Press



In this Jan. 29, 2009 file photo, former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich talks to the media outside of his home after arriving home from Springfield where the Illinois Senate voted to remove him from office.

Associated Press

Blagojevich indicted on federal corruption charges

By MIKE ROBINSON, Associated Press Writer
CHICAGO — Ousted Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich and five others were indicted Thursday on charges of scheming to auction off President Barack Obama's vacant U.S. Senate seat, pressuring a congressman for campaign money and lying to FBI agents. The 19-count indictment alleges Blagojevich and his aides discussed the

possibility he could get a Cabinet post in the new president's administration, substantial fundraising assistance or a high-paying job in exchange for the Senate seat. Obama's Deputy Press Secretary, Josh Earnest, said the White House would not comment.

Continued on page 3

Obama hails summit 'turning point' - no guarantees

JENNIFER LOVEN
AP White House
Correspondent

LONDON (AP) — Concluding his first international summit, President Barack Obama hailed agreements at the emergency meeting of world powers Thursday as a "turning point in our pursuit of global economic recovery." But he cautioned, "There are no guarantees." The new U.S. leader said the heads of industrial countries that met in London agreed on "unprecedented steps to restore growth and prevent a crisis like this from happening again." He spoke shortly after G-20 leaders pledged an additional \$1.1 trillion in financing to the International Monetary Fund and other global institutions and declared a crackdown on tax havens and hedge funds. The leaders announced the creation of a supervisory body to flag problems in the global financial system — but did not satisfy calls from the U.S. and others for new stimulus measures. Despite that failure, Obama called the one-day London

gathering "very productive" and historic because of the scope of the challenges the world faces in righting the economic crisis that's wreaking havoc on virtually every country.

"The challenge is clear. The global economy is contracting," Obama said.

In a one-hour news conference packed with media from across the world, Obama said, "We're starting to see some restoration of America's standing in the world." He had been asked about diminished esteem under his predecessor, George W. Bush.

"I do not buy into the notion that America can't lead in the world," Obama said, but he added that it is "very important for us to be able to forge partnerships as opposed to dictating solutions."

He acknowledged that some participants during the summit made comments that seemed to blame America and Wall Street for triggering the crisis that has spread around the world.

"It's hard to deny that some of the contagion did start on Wall Street," Obama said, asserting that some firms took "wild and

unjustified risks" and some government regulators were "asleep at the switch."

But he said there were problems in other parts of the world as well. As for the summit, he praised the G-20 nations for rejecting protectionism that hampers foreign trade and could deepen the economic crisis, and he urged global unity, saying, "We owe it to all of our citizens to act." Still, he said, "it is hard for 20 heads of state to bridge our differences."

"I think we did OK," he said, speaking generally about his trip. "When I came here it was with the intention of listening and learning but also providing American leadership."

He said the document the G-20 produced and actions that will follow "reflect a range of our priorities."

"We wanted to make sure we had a strong, coordinated response to growth" and "we thought it was important we had a strong, coordinated regulatory response," Obama said — and added that both were achieved.

Continued on next page

Police, protesters clash before NATO summit

DAVID RISING

Associated Press Writers

STRASBOURG, France (AP) — Riot police used tear gas and rubber bullets to beat back a crowd of several hundred anti-NATO protesters in Strasbourg on Thursday as the city in eastern France, host of the alliance's 60th anniversary summit, readied for the arrival of world leaders.

Police lobbed hundreds of tear gas canisters during clashes between about 40 riot police and some 200 masked protesters in the neighborhood of Neuhoef, in the southern part of the city near the German border.

The masked protesters had been among a crowd of about 800 demonstrators when they broke away and repeatedly pelted officers with rocks and bottles. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Police said a dozen protesters were arrested. At one point, protesters set fire in the middle of a street to building materials they had scooped up from a nearby construction site.

By late Thursday, calm had returned to Strasbourg, but two more full days of planned protests lie ahead.

Continued on page 6

Turning point

Continued from front page

When asked, he could not point to an individual summit accomplishment that would help recession-battered Americans beyond general points such as fighting protectionism and making the global economy work together.

But he said, the summit communicate "affirms the need for all countries to take fiscal responses that increase demand, that encourages the openness of markets. Those are all going to be helpful in us being able to fix what ails the economy back home."

"This is not a panacea, but it is a critical step," Obama said. He declined to specify where the White House compromised, saying the final communicate reflected a consensus of world leaders. "Each country has its own quirks or issues that a leader may decide was really really important," Obama said. He said he was committed to



U.S. President Barack Obama, left, smiles with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, centre, and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev during a group photo at the G20 Summit in the Excel centre in London, Thursday, April 2, 2009.

Associated Press

"forging a consensus instead of dictating our terms" and argued that the United States acting alone would only be "halfway effective, not even half."

On his whirlwind, weeklong European trip, the new U.S. president also met privately with other heads of state on the sidelines of the summit. He said he had had productive one-on-one talks with leaders

of Russia, China, Great Britain and India, on topics that included ways to "reduce the nuclear threat" throughout the world. He called for a coordinated response to North Korea's plans to launch a multistage rocket in the coming days.

Earlier Thursday, Obama and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak agreed on a need "for a stern, united response

from the international community" in light of North Korea's efforts toward a threatened satellite launch, and the White House announced that Lee would visit Obama in Washington on June 16.

Officials said the two leaders also discussed a free trade pact between the countries that would slash tariffs and other barriers to trade.

Obama has hinted he might seek to renegotiate a 2007 deal between South Korea and the U.S. that was hammered out under former President Bush but that legislators in the two countries failed to ratify amid opposition from farmers and labor groups. Officials said Obama told Lee that he understood there were difficulties with the deal on both sides, but that he wanted to "make progress" on it.

Obama also met on Thursday with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to discuss how their countries could work together. Obama had been expected to reassure Singh about plans to boost aid

to India's rival, Pakistan. Obama wouldn't declare that the steps the G-20 took would prevent a deeper recession. "In life there are no guarantees; in economics there are no guarantees," Obama said, coughing and sniffing at times as he battled a cold he said he'd been fighting all week.

"There are always risks involved," he added. Still, he said, "I have no doubt, though, that the steps that have been taken are critical to preventing us sliding into a depression." He called the G-20 prescriptions bolder and likely to work more quickly than any international response to an economic crisis in memory, and he said he was confident the steps would have "a concrete effect" in each nation of creating jobs, saving jobs, expanding the economy, loosening credit and restoring confidence in the financial markets.

The steps "were necessary," Obama said. "Whether they were sufficient, we've got to wait and see."

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Indict Blagojevich

Continued from front page

The indictment also charged that Blagojevich was involved in a corrupt scheme to get a massive kickback in exchange for the refinancing of billions of dollars in state pension funds. It said he took part in a plan with convicted political fixer Antoin "Tony" Rezko and two others to make money while Blagojevich was governor, then split the profits after he left the office.

Blagojevich, 52, and others are accused of illegally pressuring an Illinois congressman for help in raising funds and lying when FBI agents came to question him.

His publicist, Glenn Selig, said a statement would be issued shortly.

Blagojevich was arrested Dec. 9 on a criminal complaint, and U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald had faced a Tuesday deadline to supplant it with an indictment from a federal grand jury.

The Democrat's arrest meant curtains for his political career: The Illinois House impeached him Jan. 9, and the Senate convicted him and removed him from office Jan. 29.

Others charged in the indictment include the former governor's brother, Robert Blagojevich, one-time chief fundraiser Christopher G. Kelly, former aide Lon Monk, Springfield lobbyist-millionaire William F. Cellini and former chief of staff John Harris.

Prosecutors said Harris has agreed to cooperate in the case.

Blagojevich's administration has been under federal investigation for years. Kelly and Rezko already have been convicted of federal crimes and are facing prison.

The former governor's wife, Patti, had been mentioned prominently in the complaint and was the focus of considerable speculation, but she was not charged in the indictment.

FDA eyes N.Y. nut plant in recall

FRANK ELTMAN

Associated Press Writer

COMMACK, New York (AP) — The probe into a nationwide salmonella scare over pistachio nuts shifted Thursday from a California nut processor to its sister company in New York, where inspectors last month found cockroaches and rodent droppings.

The Food and Drug Administration said Commack-based Setton International Foods Inc. shares key staff and packages food with Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc., the nation's second-largest pistachio processor. The central California plant earlier this week recalled 2 million pounds of nuts over fears of possible salmonella contamination. A spokesman for both companies said the California plant supplies all pistachios used in the 50,000-square foot (4,645-sq. meter) Long Island processing facility, which makes chocolate- and yogurt-coated nuts and dried fruit. Last month, New York agricultural authorities discovered nearly two dozen dead cockroaches, rodent droppings and one live cockroach on an ingredient rolling rack inside the Commack plant. It failed its state health inspection.

Lee Cohen, the production manager for Setton International Foods, said Thursday the plant has stopped shipping pistachios and addressed the health and safety concerns. He said the problems weren't related to the recall and the plant is now spotless.

Inspectors went back for a second visit Wednesday to swab the plant and take food samples to be tested for salmonella and other pathogens as part of the pistachio recall, said Jessica Chittenden, a spokeswoman for the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. The test results are pending.

"Right now nothing is moving out of that plant. They're holding all products with pistachios in them," Chittenden said. "When we were in there yesterday to collect samples, they were cooperative, and we observed that they are working on the issues that we had outlined in our last inspection."

Chittenden said she was told federal inspectors also had visited the plant this week. The FDA said the agency was "investigating all aspects of the company's operations" but could not disclose details.

A security guard at the plant turned away reporters seeking comment Thursday and directed them to a spokeswoman who did not respond



Close up of pistachio nuts at a grocery store in Palo Alto, Calif., Tuesday, March 31, 2009.

Associated Press

to calls seeking comment.

So far, there have been no confirmed reports of illness linked to the recalled nuts.

Still, federal health officials warned people this week to avoid eating all pistachios and products containing them while they determine what foods could be tainted. In the meantime, a range of products from nut bars to ice cream and cake mixes remain in limbo on grocery shelves, and the number of recalled product continues to grow.

Setton International Foods has not issued its own recall, Chittenden said. Kraft Foods Inc. first alerted the FDA to the contamination after its manufacturer in Skokie, Illinois, turned up salmonella in a routine test of roasted pistachios that workers planned to add to trail mix.

Private auditors hired by Kraft found problems they think caused the contamination when they traveled to Setton Pistachio's processing facility in Terra Bella, a remote town in California's farm belt. Cohen said Tuesday he suspected that roasted pistachios at the facility could have been contaminated by salmonella-tainted raw nuts they were processed with.

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Congress votes on budget alternatives

By DAVID ESPO and ANDREW TAYLOR

Associated Press Writers WASHINGTON

— Congressional Democrats cast aside budget alternatives backed by conservatives and liberals alike on Thursday, a prelude to House and Senate passage of spending blueprints drawn to President Barack Obama's specifications.

The country wants "real change, and we have come here to make a difference," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said as both chambers worked on plans to boost spending on domestic programs, raise taxes on the wealthy in two years' time and clear the way for action later in the year on Obama's priority items of health care, energy and education.

Republicans in both houses accused Democrats of drafting plans that would hurt the recession-ravaged economy in the long run, rather than help it, and saddle future generations with too much debt.

"The administration's budget simply taxes too much, spends too much and borrows too much at a moment when we can least afford it," said the Senate Republican leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

Despite the rhetoric, there was no suspense as lawmakers engaged in an annual budget ritual destined to end in approval of the blueprints

drafted by Obama's supporters and supported by the White House.

In the House, that meant voting first on doomed alternatives drafted by progressives, the Congressional Black Caucus, Republicans and a splinter group of conservatives. In the Senate, it meant a day of sifting through nonbinding proposals often meant to score political points.

The House plan called for spending \$3.6 trillion in the budget year that begins Oct. 1, according to the Congressional Budget Office, compared with \$3.5 trillion for the Senate version and \$3.6 trillion for Obama's original plan.

The House plan envisioned a deficit of \$1.2 trillion for 2010, falling to a projected \$598 billion after five years. The comparable Senate estimates were \$1.2 trillion in 2010 and \$508 billion in 2014.

Obama's budget would leave a deficit of \$749 billion in five years' time, according to congressional estimates — too high for his Democratic allies.

To reduce the red ink, Democrats reduced Obama's proposed spending, ignored his call for another \$250 billion in bailout money for the financial industry and assumed that his signature tax cuts of \$400 for individuals and \$800 for couples would expire in 2011.

The day's events capped



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., center, with from left, House Majority Whip James Clyburn of S.C.; House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Md.; House Budget Committee Chairman Rep. John Spratt Jr., D-S.C., and Rep. John Larson, D-Conn., speaks during a news conference on the House budget resolution for the fiscal 2010 federal budget, Thursday, April 2, 2009, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

a busy three months for the Democratic-controlled Congress that took office in January.

Moving with unusual speed, lawmakers have enacted a \$787 billion economic stimulus measure, cleared the way for release of \$350 billion in financial industry bailout funds, approved an expansion of children's health care and sent Obama legislation setting aside more than 2 million acres in nine states as protected wilderness.

While they represented victories for the administration, the budgets merely cleared the way for work later in the year on key presidential priorities — expansion and overhaul of the nation's health care system, creation of a new energy policy and sweeping changes in education.

Major battles lie ahead, particularly over health care and energy. And while Obama made a series of specific proposals to fund his initiatives, congressional budget-writers avoided taking a position on his recommended curtailing of Medicare spending, for example, or imposing hundreds of billions of dollars in new costs on the nation's polluters.

The budget plans do not require Obama's signature, but the House and Senate will have to reconcile the two versions before they can move onto the next phase of Obama's agenda.

"We are not that far apart," said Rep. John Spratt, the South Carolina Democrat

who chairs the House Budget Committee.

One difference, seemingly arcane, involved the ground rules to cover work later in the year on health care.

The House budget provides for a "fast-track" procedure that would bar Senate Republicans from attempting to filibuster the legislation Obama wants to remake the nation's health care system. Republicans have warned that the prospects for bipartisanship will all but vanish if majority Democrats attempt to muzzle them.

In a long day of debate in the House, Democratic liberals and Republican conservatives took turns Thursday presenting lost-cause alternatives that reflected varying priorities.

The Progressive Caucus advanced a plan to spend hundreds of billions more on domestic programs than Obama, while cutting back on his defense budget. It failed, 348-84.

Next came a proposal from the conservative Republican Study Conference that would have cut Obama's domestic spending proposals, and reduced taxes. It was defeated, 322-111.

The Congressional Black Caucus proposed immediately repealing Bush-era tax cuts for wealthy taxpayers, while adding a new tax on couples making over \$1 million. It called for greater spending on domestic programs, including education, transportation and job training. It fell, 318-113.

House Republicans presented a comprehensive alternative,

including a provision to eliminate the current traditional Medicare program as an option for anyone currently under 55. Upon turning 65, their Medicare coverage would come only from plans operated by private insurance companies. Their costs would be paid at least in part with government funds.

Supporters said the change would prevent Medicare from going broke.

The same proposal would have cut deeply into Obama's recommended spending levels for domestic programs such as education, parks and transportation, while cutting a variety of taxes and making sure that Bush-era tax cuts on the wealthy remained in existence.

Republicans said their alternative would have spent \$4.8 trillion less than Obama's budget over 10 years, with significantly lower deficits.

Senate Republicans decided not to produce a comprehensive alternative budget, although Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and others advanced one that would have retained Bush-era tax cuts, spent more on defense, and curbed spending on Medicare and other programs. It failed, 60-38, on a near-party line vote.

Republicans also worked to limit Democratic options later in the year. They put the Senate on record against using fast-track rules to implement Obama's energy policy, which they said would impose a new energy tax of hundreds of millions of dollars.

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New storm barrage causes train collision in South

By HOLBROOK MOHR
Associated Press Writer
JACKSON, Miss. — Another barrage of storms hit the southeast Thursday, bring threats of tornadoes, causing a passenger train to hit a fallen tree and sending at least one person to the hospital after lightning struck a home. Flood warnings as well as tornado watches and warnings were in effect around the region. In south Mississippi, an Amtrak train hit a tree the storm knocked onto the tracks Thursday afternoon south of McComb in Pike County, injuring the conductor, said Carlene Statham, assistant director of Pike County Civil Defense.

The train was headed from Chicago to New Orleans with 71 passengers aboard when it hit the tree, Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said. The only report of an injury was the conductor, who complained of back pain.

Only the engine lost contact with the tracks and the "the train is powered, lit and heated," Magliari said. He said the passengers would be put on chartered buses and taken to their destinations.

The lightning strike happened in Desoto County in north Mississippi and gave the person inside "a pretty good jolt" but the injuries were not life threatening, said Bob Storey, director of the county's emergency management agency. The resident was taken to a nearby hospital as a precaution.

Also, what may have been a funnel cloud was spotted in Pike County and several homes, trees and power lines in the area were damaged, Statham said. There were no immediate reports of injuries and officials were

working to confirm if it was indeed a funnel cloud, Statham said. She said the damage at one home was caused when "the wind picked up the back porch and threw it on top of the house."

Hail ranging in size from golf balls to nickels was reported in areas of central and south-central Mississippi, said Mike Edmonston, a senior meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Waves of storms pelted west Alabama with hail and rain, and one squall blew down trees in Lamar County near the Mississippi line, county emergency management director Johnny Bigham said. No injuries were reported.

The National Weather Service said a possible tornado blew down dozens of trees near Samantha, about 20 miles north of Tuscaloosa. No injuries were immediately reported.

School officials in Enterprise, Ala., canceled classes Thursday as a precaution, mindful of a tornado that killed eight students at a high school there two years ago. Several other Alabama school systems said they would release students earlier than usual Thursday before the brunt of the system arrived.

Meanwhile, a line of violent



A flooded campground and bait store along the banks of the Ochlocknee river, are shown on Thursday, April 2, 2009, in Tallahassee, Fla.

Associated Press

thunderstorms moved through the western Florida Panhandle leaving about foot of water on some low-lying streets in the downtown Pensacola business district. Flooding was reported elsewhere in the Panhandle including in Panama City where officials blocked off streets and limited other streets to one lane. The National Weather Service issued flood warnings for the Tallahassee area and cities around Florida's central Panhandle.

"Our primary concern today is more flash flooding," said public safety director Dino Villani of Okaloosa County, which includes Fort Walton Beach. "Very little rain can cause a lot of

problems."

Cherise Davis, who lives on a road next to the Ochlocknee River about 20 miles west of Tallahassee, said some homeowners closest to the water were preparing to move if necessary. Water wasn't yet in homes but was getting close, she said.

A river in soggy southeastern Louisiana crested a bit lower than predicted, putting water into streets in a suburban New Orleans parish, but sparing almost all low-lying homes. But officials said the crest would not pass entirely through St. Tammany Parish until early Friday and authorities were patrolling several subdivisions.

Strong storms moved across Middle Tennessee, producing heavy rain, flooding and a possible tornado. National Weather Service meteorologist John Cohen in Nashville said the agency received a report of a possible tornado at 4:06 p.m. Thursday about seven miles east of downtown Nashville.

The Federal Aviation Administration evacuated the tower at Nashville International Airport and all flight activity was stopped temporarily.

The National Weather Service also issued a tornado warning for a portion of western Kentucky as a line of storms began moving through the state.

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Nato ummit

Continued from front page

Tens of thousands of demonstrators have descended on Strasbourg and two southwest German towns to protest the cross-border summit of members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which begins Friday. In Strasbourg, many shops and small businesses have shut down during the summit.

Twenty-eight world leaders will attend the two-day summit, including President Barack Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

In a bid to prevent violence, France has temporarily reinstated border controls with its immediate neighbors for the meeting.

As demonstrators gathered in Strasbourg, one Colombian activist, Gregorio Yong, said NATO was “a synonym of war.” Daniel Mouray, a protester wrapped in a rainbow flag with “peace,” said he expected little from the summit.

“We want the wars to stop and for the Americans to go back home,” he said.

German authorities estimate that up to 25,000 protesters will take part in several demonstrations in the German cities of Baden-Baden and Kehl, while France’s interior minister has suggested 30,000 to 40,000 could show up in Strasbourg, where a camp has been set up to house demonstrators.

German and French police have said 2,000 to 3,000 members of the violence-prone “black block” — so-

called for the black clothes and hoods they wear — were expected.

Some 15,000 German police — including 31 riot squads — and 9,000 French police will be on hand for the summit.

Protest organizers have called for peaceful demonstrations to highlight their complaints, including anti-war, anti-globalization, anti-capitalist and disarmament platforms. The German chapter of the left-wing Attac group, which is calling for the withdrawal of all NATO troops from Afghanistan and an end to the military alliance, climate protection and a “just world economy,” was organizing conferences, camps, demonstrations and blockades.

“The world leaders will be confronted with our protest and our call for a



Riot policemen charge demonstrators after they set up a barricade in Strasbourg, eastern France, Thursday April 2, 2009. All eyes will focus on President Barack Obama and the deadlocked war in Afghanistan he wants to turn around at an imminent summit of NATO’s 28 member nations straddling the French-German border.

Associated Press

peaceful world,” said Attac spokeswoman Gudrun Reiss. “We’re calling for massive participation.”

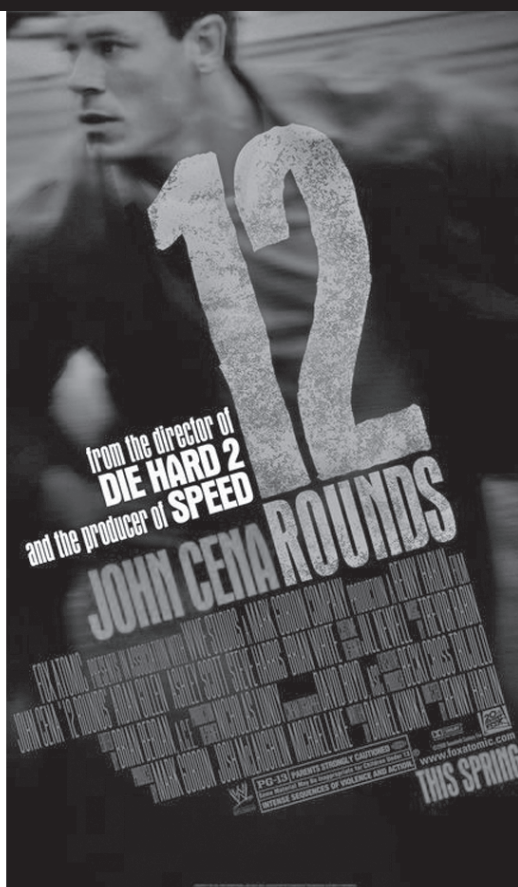
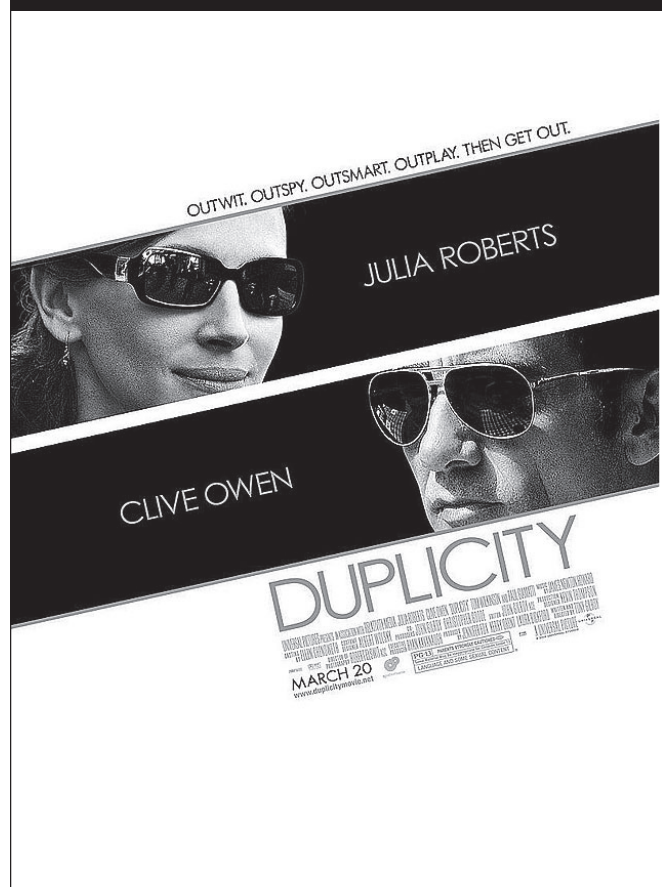
The Berlin Anti-fascist Left group said it was sending at least 10 busloads of demonstrators.

After an evening protest Thursday in Baden-Baden, the main demonstration begins Friday at noon in Kehl. The activists plan to march across the Rhine river into Strasbourg, with another protest planned for Saturday.



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	matinee:		2:00	late show:	12:00
R	GRAN TORINO				
	daily:	4:50	7:25	9:40	
	matinee:	11:55	2:20	late show:	12:10
R	WATCHMEN				
	daily:	4:40	7:50		
	matinee:	1:25		late show:	11:00
PG-13	12 ROUNDS				
	daily:	5:15	7:40	9:55	
	matinee:	12:35	2:55	late show:	12:10
PG-13	MADEA GOES TO JAIL				
	daily:	5:20	7:35	9:55	
	matinee:	12:55	3:10	late show:	12:05
PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP				
	daily:	4:15	6:20	8:20	10:15
	matinee:	12:10	2:15	late show:	12:15

AT PASEO HERENCIA

PG-13	DUPLICITY				NEW
	daily:	4:25	6:55	9:25	
	matinee:		1:55	late show:	11:55
R	WATCHMEN				
	daily:		4:40	8:00	
	matinee:	1:15		late show:	11:10
R	GRAN TORINO				
	daily:	4:55	7:20	9:45	
	matinee:	12:00	2:30	late show:	12:10
PG-13	MADEA GOESTO JAIL				
	daily:		5:30	7:45	10:00
	matinee:	1:00	3:20	late show:	12:20
PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP				
	daily:	4:15	6:10	8:10	10:15
	matinee:	12:10	2:15	late show:	12:25
PG-13	12 ROUNDS				
	daily:	5:10	7:30	9:50	
	matinee:	12:25	2:50	late show:	12:05

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Mexico reports arrest of major drug cartel suspect

E. EDUARDO CASTILLO

Associated Press Writer

MEXICO CITY (AP) — An heir to one of Mexico's most notorious narcotics empires was grabbed by police as he exercised in a city park, officials announced Thursday, shortly before U.S. and Mexican Cabinet officials met to coordinate attacks on escalating drug violence.

Carrillo Leyva allegedly inherited a top position in the Juarez cartel from his father Amado Carrillo Fuentes, who was nicknamed "the Lord of the Skies" for sending jetliners full of cocaine to the United States.

The father was considered Mexico's No. 1 drug trafficker when he died in 1997 during plastic surgery to change his appearance. The U.S. Embassy said Thursday that the embattled remnant of his cartel is still "one of Mexico's most ruthless organized criminal gangs, which controls one of the primary transportation routes for illegal drug shipments into the United States."

Prosecutors say Carrillo Leyva, 32, was second only to his uncle Vicente Carrillo Fuentes in the gang, whose battles with upstart cartels have fed a bloodbath that saw 1,600 people killed in its home base of Ciudad Juarez last year.

Just a week ago, Mexico's government posted a 30 million (\$2.1 million) reward for Carrillo Leyva and 23 other top cartel suspects. Another figure on the list already has fallen captive, as

have two alleged cartel sidekicks facing smaller bounties.

Masked police officers wearing helmets and bulletproof vests hauled Carrillo Leyva before cameras at a news conference early Thursday. The young man, looking a little like a well-coiffed college student in dark-framed glasses and a track suit emblazoned with "Abercrombie NY," showed little emotion before the flash of lights.

The announcement came hours before U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder met with Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina-Mora and Interior Minister Fernando Gomez-Mont in Cuernavaca. They were aiming at ways to stop arms smuggling across the border as well as new strategies for fighting the cartels that have fueled violence in both countries.

More than 9,000 people have been killed in drug-related violence in Mexico since President Felipe Calderon took office in 2006.

Police said Carrillo Leyva was caught Wednesday morning while exercising in a park in Mexico City's mansion-dotted Las Lomas neighborhood.

He was using an alias, Alejandro Peralta Alvarez, and was passing himself off as a businessman, said Federal Police Commissioner Rodrigo Esparza. But authorities were able to track him down through his wife, who did not change her name. The government



had records showing her sister was married to Rodolfo Carrillo Fuentes, a brother of the cartel leader.

The U.S. Embassy said Carrillo Leyva apparently faces no charges in the United States.

Two weeks ago, police arrested Vicente "El Vicentillo" Zambada, a purported top figure in Mexico's Sinaloa drug cartel. Calderon has described Zambada's father, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada as "perhaps the most important leader of cartels in Mexico."

Elsewhere Thursday, Guatemalan police captured Juan Policarpo, alleged to be one of 11 drug traffickers involved in the grisly killings of 15 Nicaraguans and a Dutch man aboard a bus in November.

Investigators say the drug gang was apparently looking for a rival trafficker's shipment when it stopped the bus in eastern Guatemala. They didn't find any drugs, but killed and burned the bodies of the passengers, some of whom they believed were members of the rival gang. Policarpo is the second suspect arrested in the case.

Federal police officers escort Vicente Carrillo Leyva, during his presentation to the media in Mexico City, Thursday, April 2, 2009. Carrillo Leyva, one of Mexico's most wanted drug suspects, who allegedly was the second-in-command of the powerful Juarez cartel, was caught while exercising in a park in a posh Mexico City neighborhood early Wednesday, the Attorney General's office said Thursday.

Associated Press

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U.S., Mexico work together to fight drug cartels



Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, right, and Mexico's Interior Secretary Fernando Gomez Mont attend a press conference in Cuernavaca, Mexico, Thursday, April 2, 2009. Associated Press

E. EDUARDO CASTILLO
Associated Press Writers
CUERNAVACA, Mexico (AP) — The U.S. and Mexico are creating a cross-border group to develop strategies for stopping the illegal flow of guns and drugs between the two countries, officials said Thursday.

Emerging from a conference with U.S. officials, Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina-Mora said more meetings are needed to develop plans to bring warring drug cartels under control along the border.

Medina-Mora said Mexico planned to begin checking 10 percent of the vehicles entering the country from the U.S. for illegal weapons and will more closely check outgoing vehicles for drugs and money.

Medina-Mora said the new vehicle-inspection measures were part of Mexico's overall \$1.4 billion modernization of border customs and crossing points. The first such vehicle checks are already being carried out in Matamoros, across the border from Brownsville, Texas.

Medina-Mora also said there had about 1,600 drug-related killings in Mexico in the first quarter of 2009, about 25 percent less than the last quarter of 2008. He did not give a reason for the decline, but the government says violence has decreased in border cities like

Ciudad Juarez after thousands of additional army troops were sent there earlier this year.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said that, in addition to beefing up border inspections north of the border, "we have to do more to reduce demand for drugs."

Napolitano and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder met privately for several hours with Medina-Mora and Mexico's Interior Minister Fernando Gomez-Mont and Public Safety Secretary Genaro Garcia Luna.

The officials hammered out an agreement that might be signed when U.S. President Barack Obama visits Mexican President Felipe Calderon later this month.

"We want to take advantage of this moment in time," Napolitano said, referring to the elevated concern on both sides of the border about drug-related killings and kidnappings blamed on the cartels.

Medina-Mora said one point still in negotiation is how to ensure prosecution of anyone violating guns laws, whether they are arrested in Mexico or the United States. In addition, he said, the two countries will create a shared ballistics database to track weapons used in crimes.

Holder said the U.S. is not seeking to change any of its gun laws as part of the effort

to curb weapons smuggling.

"I don't think our Second Amendment will stand in the way of what we have begun," he said.

Except to say that "too many weapons are flowing from the United States and into Mexico,"

Holder did not have a number of how many guns are smuggled across the border. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives recently reported that up to 95 percent of guns seized at scenes of drug violence in Mexico can be traced to U.S. commercial sources.

Between 2005 and 2008, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents seized 831 weapons along the southwest border.

Until recently, the U.S. did not regularly inspect southbound vehicles, and the Mexicans didn't scan the license plates of cars coming into the country. Facilitating legal trade, not catching gun smugglers, was the prime directive, Mexican officials said.

The threat of cartel violence is forcing a new approach. Mexico will begin scanning vehicles for drugs and money and using intelligence to target the right vehicles,

Medina-Mora said.

The U.S. will use border surveillance technology to track vehicles crossing the border and flag those making frequent trips. Additional X-ray machines and drug sniffing dogs are being deployed at border crossings to help detect weapons shipments.

Two weeks ago Customs officials at the eight railroads between the U.S. and Mexico began scanning rail cars on the way out of the U.S. instead of just on their way in. When U.S. officials see something suspicious in the X-ray, they alert Mexican law enforcement, which intercepts the rail cars in Mexico.

It was as simple as flipping a switch, said Marko Lopez Jr., chief of staff for Customs and Border Protection.

Lopez, a recent addition to the new administration, said he did not know why this wasn't being done before.

Sri Lanka says 34 rebels killed in fighting

KRISHAN FRANCIS

Associated Press Writer

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lankan troops killed 34 Tamil Tiger separatist rebels during fierce fighting in the island's north in a drive to end a 25-year-old civil war, the military said.

Troops collected the bodies of 31 rebels after intense clashes Thursday near Puthukkudiyiruppu, the last township held by the Tamil Tigers inside a tiny, shrinking territory, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Soldiers also recovered 50 assault rifles and communication equipment, he said.

The military also ambushed and killed three rebels who infiltrated Viswamadu, a village previously captured by government forces, the military said in a statement.

The Tigers — who once commanded a de facto state across a large swath of the island's north and east — have been pushed into a small sliver of coastal land measuring just 8.4 square miles in the northeast.

The military's account of the battles cannot be verified because independent journalists are barred from the war zone.

Although there has been heavy fighting in

the same area for weeks, the government says it is close to crushing the rebels, formally known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Tens of thousands of civilians are trapped in the war zone. The military says the rebels are holding them as human shields in a desperate attempt to avoid defeat. But the Tigers say the people do not want to leave and have asked for their protection. More than 23,000 civilians escaped last month, and the government estimates 30,000 to 40,000 are still trapped.

Walter Kaelin, the representative for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the rights of internally displaced people, was to meet government and aid officials and visit camps during his five-day visit starting Thursday, according to a U.N. statement.

The government announced Thursday it has taken steps to improve conditions for displaced people living in camps in line with a U.N. recommendation.

The United States has donated \$15,000 worth of food aid to Sri Lanka, sufficient to feed 300,000 displaced people for four months, the U.S. Embassy in Colombo said in a statement.

Diplomats scurry to scuttle N. Korean rocket launch

PAUL ALEXANDER
Associated Press Writer
SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Diplomats engaged in a flurry of behind-the-scenes efforts to persuade North Korea to cancel a rocket launch as the isolated regime pressed ahead with final preparations for a liftoff as early as Saturday.

North Korea says it will send a communications satellite into orbit. The U.S., South Korea and Japan think the reclusive country is using the launch to test long-range missile technology — a move they have warned would violate a U.N. Security Council resolution banning the North from ballistic activity.

“What is most important is to continue to make diplomatic efforts, concerted efforts, not only Japan, but all countries who have relationships and interests” with North Korea, Yukio Takasu, Japan’s U.N. ambassador, said Thursday in New York.

Even China, the North’s closest ally, said it was working to avert the launch, while urging restraint from all parties to avoid aggravating an already-tense situation. Chinese President Hu Jintao specifically called for calm from Japan.

After the North has said the rocket’s route would fly over Japanese territory and that some debris could fall off its northern coast, Tokyo set in motion a flurry of preparations.

It has deployed warships with anti-missile systems to the area, set up Patriot missile interceptors and established a system to warn residents when the rocket is approaching. Japan says it has no intention of trying to shoot down the rocket itself, which is expected to reach its territory within 10 minutes of the launch.

“It is a threat to the security of Japan,” Takasu said, adding that North Korea’s latest provocation has “caused serious anxiety” and “raises tensions in our region, and also internationally.”

A senior U.S. intelligence official told The Associated Press that Pyongyang was on track for a projected Saturday

launch, with pre-launch movements similar to the steps taken in advance of its 2006 firing of a Taepodong-2 missile. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence issues.

The Korea Meteorological Administration said the forecast for Saturday around the launch area on the North’s northeast coast calls for cloudy conditions, though without the strong winds that could cause the liftoff to be delayed. Other areas nearby could see some rain, it said.

If the launch does proceed, Japan and other nations plan to request an emergency session of the Security Council as soon as this weekend to discuss possible punishment.

North Korea has condemned in advance any efforts to censure it, claiming it has the right to the peaceful use of space, although military experts say the same technology could be used to launch ballistic missiles capable of reaching U.S. territory. Pyongyang is believed to have several nuclear warheads; it is unclear if it has been able to miniaturize them enough to mount on a missile.

It also has ratcheted up its militaristic rhetoric, threatening a “thunderbolt of fire” if Japan were to try to intercept the multistage rocket and warning U.S. ships — dispatched to monitor the launch — to back off or risk getting hit, too.

The issue was top of the agenda when President Barack Obama met Thursday with his South Korean counterpart, Lee Myung-bak, on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in London. The White House said they agreed on the need for “a unified response by the international community in the event that North Korea launches a long-range missile” and also discussed the North’s worrisome nuclear weapons program.

While Russia appeared to be edging closer to Washington’s position in an apparent show of goodwill, a strong united response likely would prove difficult given that China has veto power in the Security

Council.

In Washington, U.S. lawmakers are urging Obama to shoot down the rocket if it endangers the United States or its allies. But U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in a TV interview aired Sunday that the U.S. had no plans to intercept the rocket though it might consider it if an “aberrant missile” were headed to Hawaii “or something like that.”



A North Korean patrol boat near the North Korean border across from Dandong, northeastern China’s Liaoning province, Thursday, April 2, 2009. North Korea has begun fueling a long-range rocket for an impending launch, a news report said Thursday.

Associated Press

Australia backs United Nations’ indigenous rights declaration



Australia’s Prime Minister Kevin Rudd speaks at a press conference at the end of the G20 Summit at the Excel centre in London, Thursday, April 2, 2009. The objective of the London Summit is to bring the world’s biggest economies together to help restore global economic growth through enhanced international coordination.

Associated Press

ROHAN SULLIVAN
Associated Press Writer
SYDNEY (AP) — Australia adopted the U.N.’s declaration of indigenous rights on Friday, reversing its earlier opposition in what officials said was an effort to “reset” relations between white Australians and Aborigines.

The support for the nonbinding declaration is a largely symbolic step, but extends a dramatic shift in policy on Aborigines since Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was elected 17 months ago.

“In supporting the declaration Australia takes another important step toward resetting relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians,” Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin said at a ceremony

in the national capital, Canberra, that was broadcast nationally.

Australia was one of just four nations that voted against the U.N. declaration when it was adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. The United States, New Zealand and Canada were the other opponents, while 143 countries voted in favor and 11 abstained.

The former conservative government argued that the declaration could override existing laws and give unfair advantage to Aborigines, who are an impoverished and unhealthy minority after 220 years of white settlement in Australia. The U.S. has voiced similar objections, and both countries said they had been shut out of the final negotiations

on the text.

Aboriginal rights are often a contentious issue, and arguments over traditional land ownership and special benefits have split the community in the past. Rudd’s center-left government has adopted a less combative approach to indigenous affairs than his predecessor, John Howard. One of Rudd’s first acts as prime minister was to offer a formal apology to Aborigines for past government injustices — a powerful gesture that Howard had resisted for years.

The declaration affirms the equality of the world’s more than 370 million indigenous peoples and their right to maintain their own institutions, cultures and spiritual traditions. It also establishes standards to combat discrimination and marginalization and eliminate human rights violations against them. At the ceremony, Macklin said the government’s support for the declaration would not affect on existing laws, but accorded recognition to the special place that Aborigines had in Australia as the world’s oldest continuous indigenous culture.

Aborigines are a minority of some 400,000 in a population of 21 million. They are the poorest group in society and often live in squalid and overcrowded conditions in the Outback or on urban fringes where alcohol and drug abuse is rife. Aborigines die — often from preventable diseases — on average 17 years younger than their fellow Australians.

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY

NHL Roundup

Penguins rout slumping Brodeur, Devils 6-1



Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby, second from left, celebrates his second period goal with teammates Chris Dunitz (14), Evgeni Malkin, second from right, of Russia, and Kris Letang (58) against the New Jersey Devils in an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. The Penguins won 6-1.

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Evgeni Malkin and Sidney Crosby racked power-play goals as the Pittsburgh Penguins ended one of the best homestands in team history in routing Martin Brodeur and the slumping New Jersey Devils 6-1 in the NHL on Wednesday.

Brodeur and the Devils have lost six straight. Matt Cooke and Bill Guerin scored 36 seconds apart in the first period to make it 2-0, and Crosby and Jordan Staal made the game one-sided by scoring in a 13-second span of the second. The Penguins finished 6-1-1

during the longest homestand in their history, improving to 13-2-1 since Feb. 25.

Capitals 5, Islanders 3

At Washington, Mike Green's two power-play goals less than 1½ minutes apart in the third period and Alex Ovechkin's NHL-leading 54th tally helped Washington close in on a second consecutive division title.

Green's 18 man-advantage goals set a team record for a defenseman, breaking the mark of 16 held by Scott Stevens. Ovechkin has 33 home goals, one more than the Capitals' record he set in 2007-08.

Nicklas Backstrom added a final-minute goal for Washington, which completed its first season sweep of New York since 2002-03.

Kyle Okposo and Frans Nielsen each had a goal and an assist for the Islanders.

Maple Leafs 3, Flyers 2

At Toronto, Jamal Mayers, Lee Stempniak and Ian White scored for already-eliminated Toronto

in a win over playoff-hopeful Philadelphia.

Arron Asham and Claude Giroux scored for the Flyers, who were outworked all night by the Maple Leafs.

Mayers and Asham exchanged goals in an evenly played opening period.

The Flyers, fourth in the Eastern Conference, are tied on points with Pittsburgh with just over one week left in the season.

Curtis Joseph, who will turn 42 this month, earned the win in his 10th start of the season.

Thrashers 3, Sabres 2, OT

At Atlanta, Ilya Kovalchuk scored on an unassisted breakaway with 29.9 seconds left in overtime to lift Atlanta over Buffalo. The goal was Kovalchuk's 41st and gave him 30 in 37 games.

Buffalo's three-game winning streak ended. With 83 points, the Sabres are four behind ninth-place Florida and five behind Montreal and the playoff cutoff in the Eastern Conference.

Thomas Vanek scored twice for Buffalo.

Rookie defenseman Zach Bogosian and Slava Kozlov, with his 25th of the season, also had Thrashers goals. Atlanta has won three straight and 10 of 13.

Blackhawks 3, Blues 1

At Chicago, Nikolai Khabibulin made 16 saves, and Jonathan Toews, Samuel Pahlsson and Colin Fraser scored for Chicago, which snapped St. Louis' five-game winning streak.

The Blackhawks moved within one point of clinching their first playoff berth since 2001-02 and their second in 11 seasons. Chicago also jumped one point ahead of Calgary and into fourth place in the Western Conference. Khabibulin lost a bid for his second shutout when St. Louis' Jeff Woywitka scored a power-play goal with 1.5 seconds remaining. The Blackhawks, who had lost their previous two games limited the Blues to their second-lowest shot output this season.

Nadal upset by del Potro

STEVEN WINE

AP Sports Writer

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (AP) — Rafael Nadal's bid for his first Sony Ericsson Open title was ended by Juan Martin del Potro 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (3) in the quarterfinals on Thursday. Del Potro had lost all nine sets in their four previous matches, but he was buoyed by a home-court advantage, with many transplanted Argentines in the crowd singing "Del-Po" between points.

Victoria Azarenka, a 19-year-old Belarussian, earned a berth in the women's final by beating Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 2-6, 7-5.

The No. 6-seeded del Potro's opponent on Friday will be the winner of the last quarterfinal between No. 4 Andy Murray

and No. 8 Fernando Verdasco. Top-ranked Nadal's three-hour match with del Potro built to a dramatic finish. Nadal was up two breaks in the final set at 3-love before del Potro rallied to win the next four games.

In the 12th game of the set, Nadal saved three match points, two with aces. He caught a break in the tiebreaker when his return skipped along the net cord before clearing it for a winner and a 3-2 lead.

That was the last point Nadal won. Del Potro hit three consecutive winners for a 6-3 lead, and on the final point Nadal put a backhand in the net as the crowd erupted.

Nadal, a six-time Grand Slam champion, won at Indian Wells two weeks ago, but his best finish at Key Biscayne

was as the runner-up in 2005 and 2008.

Azarenka kept waving clenched fists during her semifinal, as if there was any doubt she meant business. Celebrating every important point she won, the teenager earned her biggest victory yet.

She'll play for the title on Saturday against the winner of the late semifinal between Serena and Venus Williams.

"It's the first final in such a big tournament for me," Azarenka said. "It's the biggest moment, I would say, in my career. It's all kind of an experience for me. It's a new thing that I'm going to be introduced to on how to handle."

Azarenka closed out the victory on her fourth match



Juan Martin del Potro, of Argentina, left, shakes hands with Rafael Nadal, of Spain, after defeating Nadal in a quarterfinal in Key Biscayne, Fla., Thursday, April 2, 2009. Del Potro won 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (3).

Associated Press

point when Kuznetsova netted a backhand to end the 2-hour, 40-minute endurance test played in 85-degree (30-degree C) sunshine.

"I'm just so happy that I found energy in that fighting

moment," Azarenka said. "That was kind of adrenaline, I would say, on the last games."

Azarenka was ranked a career-best 10th after reaching the semifinals at Indian Wells.

NBA Roundup

Allen's 3-pointer gives Celtics 111-109 OT win

BOSTON (AP) — Ray Allen made a 3-pointer with 2.1 seconds left in the second overtime to lift the Boston Celtics over the Charlotte Bobcats 111-109 and into second place in the NBA's Eastern Conference on Wednesday.

The Bobcats, fighting for the final playoff spot in the conference, blew leads in the last 30 seconds of the fourth quarter and both overtimes and fell 1½ games behind the Chicago Bulls, who were idle. The Celtics moved a game ahead of Orlando, which lost to Toronto.

Paul Pierce led Boston with 32 points, Allen added 22 and Rajon Rondo had 21 points and nine assists. Gerald Wallace had 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Bobcats, and Boris Diaw scored 17 points.

Mavericks 98, Heat 96

At Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 30 points, and Josh Howard had 20 points and drew a game-saving foul with 2.3 seconds left in Dallas' victory over Miami.

The Mavericks beat the Heat for the 10th straight time in the regular season.

Dwyane Wade had 23 points and six assists, but wasn't able to pull off any late-game heroics, in part because of stiff defense by Jason Kidd.

Lakers 104, Bucks 98

At Milwaukee, Kobe Bryant rebounded from a rough shooting night to hit his first seven from the field and score 30 points, and Pau Gasol had eight of his 15 in the fourth quarter as Los Angeles beat Milwaukee.

Lamar Odom added 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Lakers,

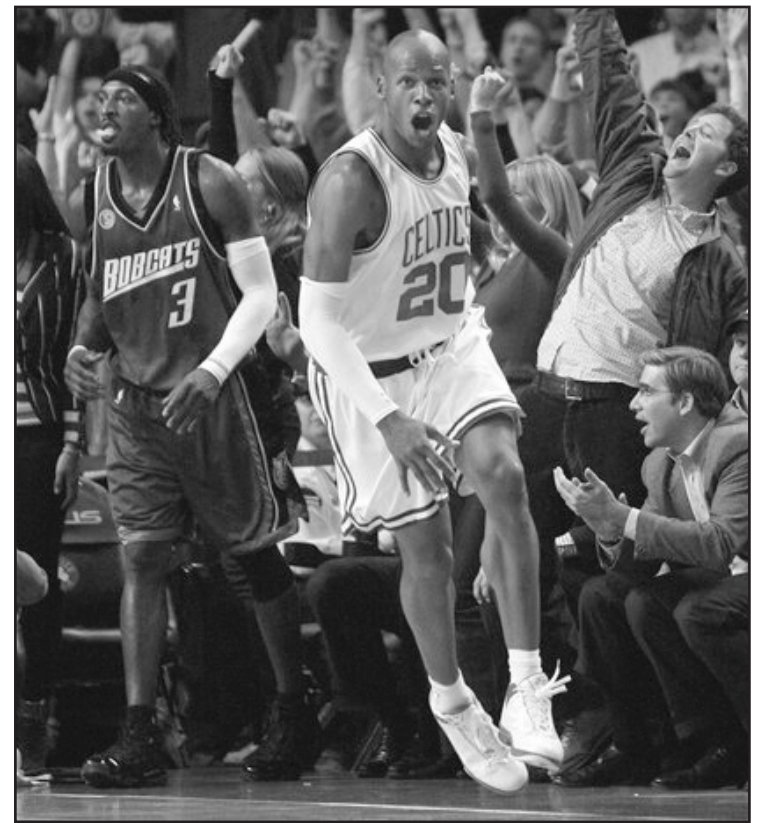
who were playing the finale of a grueling seven-game road trip and coming off two straight losses.

Ramon Sessions had his first career triple-double for the Bucks, who fell four games out of the Eastern Conference's final playoff spot. Sessions finished with 16 points, 16 assists and 10 rebounds.

Raptors 99, Magic 95

At Orlando, Florida, Chris Bosh had 24 points, including a 22-footer over Dwight Howard with 29 seconds left that put the game out of reach, as Toronto beat Orlando.

Jose Calderon had 21 points, and Shawn Marion added 17 points and 15 rebounds for the Raptors, who nearly blew an 11-point lead before holding on to extend their season-high winning streak to five games. Rashard Lewis missed



Boston Celtics' Ray Allen (20) and Charlotte Bobcats' Gerald Wallace (3) react after Allen hit the winning 3-point shot during the second overtime of an NBA basketball game in Boston on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. The Celtics won 111-109.
Associated Press

a potential tying 3-pointer with 20 seconds left to seal Toronto's win.

Dwight Howard had 30 points and nine rebounds for Orlando.

Suns 114, Rockets 109

At Phoenix, Steve Nash had 25 points and 17 assists as Phoenix held on to beat Houston and breathe some life into its flickering playoff hopes.

Grant Hill had 23 points, Shaquille O'Neal 22 and Jason Richardson 18 as the Suns won their season-best sixth straight at home. Phoenix snapped a three-game losing streak overall to remain four games behind Dallas for the eighth and final playoff spot in the West, with just seven to play.

Ron Artest scored 28 for the Rockets, who dropped to fourth in the crowded scramble for playoff positioning in the West.

Hornets 104, Clippers 98

At Los Angeles, Chris Paul had 30 points and 14 assists and David West added 19 points as New Orleans moved closer to the top of the Southwest Division by beating Los Angeles.

The Hornets are just one game behind idle San Antonio in the

Southwest Division and a half-game behind Houston, which lost in Phoenix.

Eric Gordon scored 11 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, including a jumper that put Los Angeles ahead by one. Zach Randolph added 24 for the Clippers, who lost their ninth straight to New Orleans.

Nets 111, Pistons 98

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Devin Harris had 19 points and 11 assists as New Jersey snapped a season-high, five-game losing streak by beating sluggish Detroit.

Keyon Dooling, inserted into the starting lineup to give the team more life, scored 18 of his 23 points in the second half in helping the reeling Nets win for only the seventh time in 24 games. The point total matched his season high.

Richard Hamilton scored 29 points for the Pistons, who were playing their fourth game in five nights. They were also without Rasheed Wallace, who was suspended for picking up his 16th technical foul the night before.

High winds suspend play in Shell Houston Open

CHRIS DUNCAN

AP Sports Writer

HUMBLE, Texas (AP) — The first round of the Shell Houston Open was suspended because of high winds with only half the 72-player field on the course on Thursday. The round will resume on Friday.

A morning thunderstorm postponed the start of the tournament by 2½ hours. Play was then stopped at 12:50 p.m. because of winds that were strong enough to move balls on the slippery greens before players could mark them. The round was suspended for the day at 3 p.m. after wind gusts reached 50 mph.

"We couldn't conduct the competition properly this afternoon," U.S. PGA tournament director Mark Russell said.

Lee Westwood shot a 4-under 32 on the front nine to take a two-shot lead before the horns sounded across the course. Westwood sank 18-foot birdie putts on the first two holes, then added a 45-footer on the par-3 ninth.

He was ready to hit a 15-foot birdie putt on the 10th hole when a tournament official warned

him that play was about to be stopped.

"I said, 'Oh, so I can putt it now while it's unplayable, or come back in the morning, when there's no wind on the greens,'" he said. "Let me think about that."

The National Weather Service measured sustained winds of 25 mph with gusts up to 40 mph on Thursday morning.

The wind delay was the first on the U.S. PGA Tour since the final round of the 2007 Verizon Heritage Classic at Hilton Head was suspended until the Monday. "You don't often get weather delays without a cloud in the sky, that's for sure," Westwood said.

The Houston event drew a star-studded field, with 15 of the top-20 players in the world rankings here to fine-tune their games before next week's Masters.

Organizers have tried to set up the Tournament Course at Redstone club with conditions simulating Augusta — fast greens and light rough. Westwood said the speed of the greens contributed to the stoppage.

"That's been the problem, really, the pace of the greens," he said. "Once the wind started blowing as strongly as it did, there was no way the ball could stand still."

Westwood held a two-shot lead over a pack of eight players at 2-under Big-hitting Spaniard Alvaro Quiros didn't cope with the wind quite so well, ballooning to 9-over par through 12 holes before the delay. Playing in the first group of the day, Quiros hit only three fairways with his first seven tee shots and drove into the water on the par-4 11th for a double bogey.

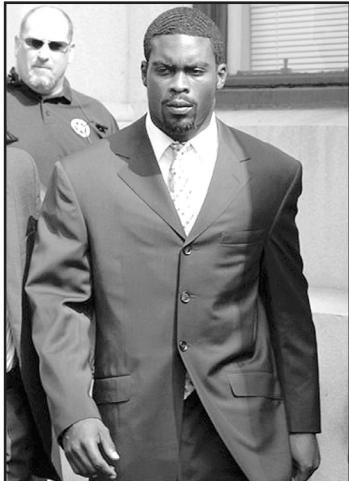
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Agent: Vick wants to return to NFL by September



In this Aug. 27, 2007 file photo, Atlanta Falcons football player Michael Vick leaves federal court after pleading guilty to a dogfighting charge in Richmond, Va.

Associated Press

LARRY O'DELL
Associated Press Writer
NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia (AP) — An agent for suspended NFL star Michael Vick told a bankruptcy court on Thursday that he hopes the former Atlanta Falcons quarterback could return to the league by September. Joel Segal testified as part of a hearing to assess Vick's plan to emerge from bankruptcy, which was designed with the goal of Vick returning to a professional American football career. Vick, who left a federal prison in Kansas last week to travel to

Virginia, was in court for the first time in the case.

To return to a team, Vick still must apply to NFL commissioner Roger Goodell to be reinstated. He hasn't yet done so, Segal said, and plans first to finish his 23-month sentence for bankrolling a dogfighting operation. He will return to his family and community, and when he was ready, start working with strength and quarterback coaches.

Segal said he'd try to negotiate a one- or two-year contract that includes incentives for playing time and a starting position. Segal said he hasn't spoken to teams because Vick was still under contract with the Falcons, though the team has said he won't play for Atlanta again.

"He'll let me know when he's ready for that, and when Mike's ready, we have a plan," Segal said.

Vick is expected to testify at the hearing, which is scheduled to last through Friday. Much of the testimony has detailed some of the ways he plans to spend his life once he is released from federal custody in July. He could be transferred to home confinement in late May.

One of those changes will be a construction job, Blumenthal said. Vick has lined up a 40-hour-a-week, \$10-an-hour job at one of W.M. Jordan Co.'s 40

commercial construction jobs, said John Robert Lawson, whose father helped start the Newport News company.

Lawson, 57, said that he has known Vick for more than 10 years and that they have been involved in charitable work together. He said Vick's representatives approached him when the former hometown hero was turned away by other employers.

"I believe all of us make mistakes, and once you've fulfilled your commitment and paid the price, you should be given a second chance," Lawson said in a telephone interview. "He's not a bad person. He made some bad choices."

Once one of the NFL's highest-paid players, Vick began to slide into financial ruin after details about the brutality of his dogfighting enterprise enraged the public. But court records show they were already in serious disarray because of lavish spending and poor investments. This week, Vick and the Falcons agreed that he would pay back \$6.5 million of his Atlanta contract, moving closer to cutting ties with a team that doesn't want him. Vick was suspended indefinitely after his 2007 indictment, and Goodell has said he will review Vick's status after he was released.



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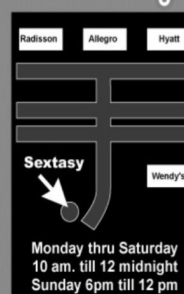


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Cuestionado empresario dice financió referendo reelección Uribe

BOGOTA (Reuters) - Un polémico empresario, acusado de estafar a miles de colombianos y solicitado en extradición en Estados Unidos por lavado de dólares del narcotráfico, dijo que financió con 2 millones de dólares un referendo que busca la segunda reelección inmediata del presidente Alvaro Uribe. La afirmación de David Murcia, confinado en una cárcel de Bogotá, podría complicar el trámite de aprobación del referendo en momentos en que el panorama parece despejado para que el popular mandatario colombiano sea habilitado para buscar su continuidad en el poder.

En declaraciones publicadas el jueves por la revista Cambio, Murcia dijo que inicialmente su firma DMG apoyó el referendo con la recolección de firmas.

“Se hizo lo del transporte de las firmas que eso vale un dinero porque es a nivel nacional”, aseguró el controvertido hombre de negocios, quien sostuvo que “fue necesario utilizar aviones, helicópteros, transporte blindado, etc., y también aprobé unos recursos para que compraran camisetas, gorras y un poco de papelería que necesitaban”.

Murcia se abstuvo de revelar los nombres de las personas a las que entregó los recursos,

en momentos en que las autoridades electorales investigan supuestas irregularidades en el proceso de financiación del referendo. El proyecto de referendo es analizado en el Congreso, donde le falta la aprobación de una comisión del Senado y luego de la plenaria de esa misma cámara, después de que en diciembre la había autorizado pero a partir del 2014.

Sin embargo, el Gobierno y los promotores de una segunda reelección inmediata de Uribe sostienen que el Senado puede introducir modificaciones a la redacción para permitir la continuidad en el poder del popular mandatario en el 2010.

Los promotores del referendo sostienen que más de 4 millones de personas que lo apoyaron con sus firmas respaldaron la reelección a partir del próximo año y no del 2014 como lo interpretó la Cámara de Representantes por un error en la redacción del texto de la consulta.



El presidente de Colombia, Alvaro Uribe (izq), es saludado por el vicepresidente de Panamá, Samuel Lewis Navarro, a su llegada en el aeropuerto internacional Tocumen en Ciudad de Panamá, 1 abr 2009. REUTERS/Alberto Lowe

Detienen a ex ministro de Defensa en Venezuela

CARACAS (AP) - El ex ministro de la Defensa, general retirado Raúl Isaías Baduel, que pasó a ser opositor del presidente Hugo Chávez, fue detenido el jueves por agentes de la inteligencia militar, denunció su abogado defensor y lo confirmó luego el fiscal general castrense. La esposa de Baduel dijo a la prensa que a su marido le pusieron una pistola en la cabeza y le impidieron llamar a su abogado.

El general Ernesto Cedeño, fiscal general militar, dijo a la estatal Venezolana de Televisión (VTV) que Baduel fue detenido en cumplimiento de un “mandato de conducción” para ser trasladado a un tribunal militar en Caracas.

Cedeño indicó que existen suficientes “elementos de convicción suficientes” en el caso que se le sigue al general retirado por “una presunta sustracción de fondos” de las fuerzas armadas durante su gestión como ministro.

El abogado Omar Mora Tosta, defensor de Baduel, declaró previamente que el general fue arrestado por una comisión de la Dirección General de Inteligencia Militar (DGIM) en el estado centro costero de Aragua.

“El viernes tenía que presentarse ante el tribunal, no había necesidad de una acción atropellada como ésta, no se comprende desde el punto de vista legal y estaríamos en presencia de una violación de sus derechos”, agregó el abogado.

El ex ministro de la Defensa, quien se distanció a fines del año 2007 del presidente Chávez para oponerse a su proyecto de reforma de constitución, es investigado por la Fiscalía Militar por un supuesto caso de corrupción.

México captura a presunto líder de Cartel de Juárez

MEXICO (AP) - Vicente Carrillo Leyva, uno de los dos presuntos líderes del cartel de Juárez y uno de los cabecillas del narcotráfico más buscados por las autoridades mexicanas fue capturado mientras realizaba ejercicio en un parque de la capital del país, informó el jueves la policía federal.

Carrillo Leyva es hijo del difunto Amado Carrillo Fuente, alias “El señor de los cielos”, uno de los más afamados capos de las drogas de México, quien por varios años encabezó el cartel de Juárez y murió durante una cirugía facial en 1997.

El hombre, de 32 años, era uno de los presuntos 24 líderes del narcotráfico que

la Procuraduría General de la República (PGR) puso en una lista de recompensas y por el que se ofrecían 2,1 millones de dólares por su captura.

El comisionado de la Policía Federal, Rodrigo Esparza, informó en rueda de prensa que Carrillo Leyva fue detenido en una zona residencial del sur de la ciudad de México el miércoles por la mañana, cuando realizaba ejercicios en un parque.

Las autoridades presentaron ante la prensa a Carrillo Leyva, quien vestía un conjunto deportivo blanco y gafas.

La detención ocurrió a unas horas de que llegaran a México los secretarios estadounidenses de Seguridad Interior, Janet Napolitano, y de Justicia, Eric

Holder, en medio de una serie de visitas de altos funcionarios de Estados Unidos para mostrar su compromiso en colaborar en la lucha contra el narcotráfico que ha emprendido el gobierno del presidente Felipe Calderón.

El presunto capo también es sobrino de Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, alias “El Viceroy”, considerado como el actual líder máximo del Cartel de Juárez y por quien también se ofrecen 2,1 millones de dólares.

El joven realizaba tareas directivas y de ocultamiento de recursos ilícitos para el cartel, bajo la tutela de su tío, dijo Marisela Morales, responsable del combate a la delincuencia organizada de la PGR.



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